

Cardinal Langley Roman Catholic High School

Address: Rochdale Road, Middleton, Manchester, Lancashire, M24 2GL

Unique reference number (URN): 105844

Inspection report: 9 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders keep a watchful eye on attendance patterns to spot concerns early. Staff regularly remind pupils and families about the importance of regular attendance in assemblies, newsletters and form time. Aided by these factors, pupils' overall attendance, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, has consistently improved and is significantly above the national average. Leaders take time to understand why a pupil might struggle to come to school. They use this information to support them back into attending regularly. For example, leaders provide help such as counselling to reduce anxiety for pupils about their return to school. These approaches help pupils to attend more often. Persistent absence continues to reduce quickly.

Leaders create a calm and caring environment where positive behaviour is expected. Pupils are polite and respectful in lessons and at social times. They cooperate well with each other and build supportive relationships with staff. Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones in school and have begun to develop other interests together, such as playing board games. This is developing their communication skills. Leaders monitor unwanted behaviours, such as bullying. Pupils know that these behaviours are not tolerated. Staff deal quickly and effectively with any issues that do arise. Leaders provide proactive support for a small minority of pupils who need help to improve their behaviour.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is thoughtfully designed and responsive to emerging issues. For example, recent developments to the curriculum have strengthened pupils' insight into community cohesion. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe, including online. They can explain in detail how online fraud can be avoided and how fundamental British values such as tolerance and democracy relate to their own lives. As a result, they are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils develop a deep and thorough knowledge of the PSHE, citizenship, relationships and sex education and health education curriculums. They talk in depth about topics currently in the national news. Pupils have opportunities to become 'young health activists' for the local authority. This helps them to develop their leadership skills. Pupils have a secure knowledge of healthy relationships. Visits from external speakers support pupils in developing their understanding of the issues that young people may face in society.

Leaders meet regularly to share information and ensure that pupils' pastoral needs are identified quickly. This results in pupils receiving timely, caring support.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, benefit from a wide range of personal development opportunities. These include various creative clubs, which nurture pupils' creative talents, and the equality network, which strengthens pupils' knowledge of diversity.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to explore their future options, including further education and career pathways. In the sixth form, students engage with visiting

speakers from local colleges to inform them about their options. The 'aspire' programme helps students to apply to prestigious universities. As a result, pupils feel confident in their next steps, choosing ambitious courses and apprenticeships that reflect their aspirations.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, achieve well over time. Pupils build and connect knowledge throughout the curriculum. This gives them a solid foundation of skills and knowledge, helping them to be ready for the next stages of their learning. Pupils grow into fluent readers and accurate writers. They use numbers confidently. As a result, most pupils have the skills they need to succeed in the future.

In recent years, pupils have achieved well in national examinations at the end of key stage 4. They usually attain close to national averages, and this includes disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with SEND make clear progress from their starting points.

Students in the school's sixth form largely achieve well. In some subjects, students often attain above national averages. This equips them to move forward with confidence into their next steps in education, employment or training.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders make sure that the curriculum is carefully and thoughtfully designed. This supports all pupils to build and connect knowledge over time. Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of how well teachers deliver the curriculum. This helps inform the professional learning that leaders plan for staff. Typically, teachers deliver the curriculum with confidence and care, drawing on their subject knowledge to support pupils' learning.

Teachers typically use well-designed tasks to develop pupils' understanding. Where this is most effective, teachers use assessments to identify what pupils have understood. They use this to adapt activities to fill any gaps in learning. However, this is not consistent across subjects.

Leaders ensure that staff receive the detailed information they need to adapt learning so every pupil is supported to succeed. Most staff use this information well. This supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to progress with their learning. There is some work ongoing to secure the consistency of these adaptations and strategies further so that pupils are supported even more effectively across the curriculum.

Pupils who are still developing their early reading, writing and mathematics skills receive targeted support to help them build the knowledge and confidence they need to catch up and keep up.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure staff receive high quality training so that they can understand and meet the needs of every pupil, including those known to children's services or with other barriers to their learning. Because of this, barriers are identified quickly and accurately. Families have confidence that their children are well understood and supported. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. When pupils face disadvantages, leaders carefully target extra funding to reduce barriers to learning, for instance, by engaging an alternative provision specialising in therapeutic support for pupils with social and emotional barriers to their learning. Leaders have also engaged a school counsellor and key workers for pupils with other barriers to success. Because of this, pupils feel secure attending school and can learn the same rich curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have close partnerships with a wide range of external agencies, such as those focused on mental health. This ensures pupils and families receive the right help at the right time. For pupils with barriers to attendance, such as those with long-term illnesses, leaders make use of technology to enable pupils to access lessons remotely and continue to achieve. Leaders also ensure that disadvantaged pupils have the same access to wider opportunities as their peers.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Those responsible for governance have a detailed understanding of their statutory responsibilities, such as safeguarding. They have an important role in challenging and supporting leaders' progress towards improvement priorities. Governors are passionate about achieving the best outcomes for pupils. Their decisions are in the best interests of pupils, particularly those who are more vulnerable. Governors closely monitor the effective use of extra funding to ensure those who are disadvantaged have the same opportunities as their peers. There is a climate of inclusion and ambition among leaders and staff. Staff feel they are listened to by school leaders and that their workload is considered when planning the school's calendar of events. Because of these factors, staff morale is high. They are very proud to work at Cardinal Langley.

Leaders make sure that staff have the training that they need to understand pupils' needs and grow in their own roles. Staff appreciate these opportunities. They contribute proactively from their learning to the priorities of the school and enabling pupils to develop a keen sense of belonging.

Leaders work with other schools and organisations, such as the diocese and the local authority, in a culture of mutual support and challenge. Leaders at Cardinal Langley have been the driving force and main contributors to many of these partnerships, such as helping other schools to improve their attendance.

Leaders engage with the community and parents and carers in several ways, including via the 'Cardinal Langley voice' newsletter. This helps parents to stay informed about the school's events and successes.

Leaders have created a broad, well-organised curriculum and ensure that it is taught with care and consistency. Because of this, most students achieve well and gain a range of A-level, applied and technical qualifications. In some subjects, this is reflected in attainment rates above the national average. Students are well supported. Relationships are highly positive between staff and students. Students feel proud of their sixth form and praise the support they receive. Together, these elements ensure that students feel confident and are well prepared for their next steps in education or training.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who face other barriers to learning are supported with care so that they can access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and thrive alongside them. This includes support for pupils who are experiencing personal or medical difficulties.

Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities, such as extended project work and the 'aspire' programme. This builds students' confidence and application writing skills for universities. Students also act as role models for younger pupils in their roles as 'guardian angels'. As a result, students grow both academically and as responsible young adults.

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

Pupils at Cardinal Langley, including sixth-form students, are proud of their school. They build positive relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils enjoy their learning and are well supported to achieve their full potential. They know staff will help if they have a concern, and they can also share concerns via the school's 'confide' app. This helps them to feel safe. Most pupils and students usually achieve well. Those who face additional barriers to learning, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, quickly receive the support and guidance they need to succeed.

Pupils feel guided and supported about the behaviours expected of them. This helps them to feel secure and ready to learn. In lessons, they engage very well. At social times, they show kindness and respect in the way they speak and behave towards others. Pupils recognise that bullying occurs rarely. However, when issues do occur, they know that staff will deal with these quickly and effectively. Pupils attend school regularly. This builds positive routines and a sense of belonging. If pupils face barriers to their attendance, leaders put in place effective support to help pupils overcome these.

There is a range of activities to further pupils' and students' personal development. These include the DJ club, which nurtures pupils' musical talents, and opportunities to become 'guardian angels', who develop pupils' communication skills. Pupils learn about fundamental British values such as democracy and tolerance in ways that help them relate these values to their own lives and relationships. Pupils build a secure and confident understanding of the range of post-16 options open to them. They are supported each step of the way, including

by instilling them with self-belief. Whether they leave at 16 or 18, pupils are confident, capable and ready for the next stage, be that further education, employment or training.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their strategies for raising attainment are effective across subjects.
 - Leaders should ensure that adaptive teaching strategies are consistently implemented in all classrooms to meet the needs of all pupils effectively.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Brian McAnenny.

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, governors, groups of staff and pupils during the inspection. They also spoke with a representative of the diocese, leaders from some alternative providers that the school uses and representatives of the local authority, including the headteacher of the virtual school.

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 inspection started on 9 June 2026. Inspectors returned on 9 July 2026 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Salford. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2024.

The school currently makes use of 7 alternative provisions, all of which are unregistered.

Headteacher: Andrew Bridson

Lead inspector:

Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lisa Corrigan, His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Ruddy, Ofsted Inspector

Julie Yarwood, Ofsted Inspector

Katy Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Sally Kenyon, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Halcro, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,199

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,200

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)

28.66%

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: 28.9%

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

4.59%

Above 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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.18%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to 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)	31.8%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	38.7%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.5%	45.3%	Close to average

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)	40.9	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	43.2	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46.9	46.3	Close to average

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)	-0.12	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.01	-0.03	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' 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)	25.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	25.6%	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)	36.5	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.8	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	39.1	35.0	Close to average

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)	-0.59	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.08	-0.57	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)	25.4%	53.1%	-27.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	32.8%	53.1%	-20.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	25.6%	52.4%	-26.9 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)	36.5	50.4	-13.9
2023/24 (final)	36.8	50.0	-13.2
2022/23 (final)	39.1	50.3	-11.2

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)	-0.59	0.16	-0.76
2022/23 (final)	0.08	0.17	-0.09

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)	94%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	33.25	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.60	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.66	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.2	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

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)	7.5%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.4%	9.0%	Close to average

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)	20.4%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	27.1%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	28.3%	26.5%	Close to average

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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