

Cardinal Langley RC High School

1 Rochdale Road, Middleton, Manchester, M24 2GL

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching across some subjects is too variable and not good enough to raise achievement to good.
- The quality of marking varies between subjects and between teachers, causing some students to be unclear about what they need to do to improve or allow them to reflect on their learning.
- Students, including the most able, are not always challenged appropriately or inspired in some lessons, resulting in progress that is slower than it could be, for example in mathematics, geography and drama.
- Teachers do not always use data effectively to plan exciting lessons that stretch students fully.
- Given their starting points, the proportion of students who make more than expected progress in mathematics is too low and not currently showing signs of improvement.
- In some subjects, for example English, some lower ability students are not stretched as strongly as their peers in other groups.
- In 2014, too few students gained the highest grades in GCSE mathematics.
- The mathematics improvement plan has not had sufficient impact on students' progress

The school has the following strengths

- The relatively new headteacher has quickly identified and grasped the challenges of the school. He is unrelenting in his drive to improve standards. He is well respected, clear in his vision and has the support of the whole school community.
- Governors are skilful in challenging and holding school leaders and staff to account. They know acutely what challenges remain for the school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is extremely strong. They show great respect for all people, regardless of their background, beliefs or cultures.
- Students and staff are extremely courteous and respectful of each other. There is a strong sense of purpose in the school. Students behave well.
- The school ensures that students are kept safe.
- The proportion of students achieving five good passes overall; including English and mathematics, in GCSE examinations continues to rise and is now above the national average.
- Students who join the sixth form make good progress, leaving with standards much higher than expected, given their starting points.
- Other leaders, particularly middle leaders, are very capable and challenge underperformance wherever they see it. They give exemplary care and support to each other.
- Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its leaders.
- In some subjects, particularly science, religious education and physical education, students make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited a wide range of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with leaders of the school. They also visited tutor groups and an assembly.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at supporting documents and records, including those that relate to safeguarding and child protection; the school leaders’ views of the performance of staff and students; the school’s own achievement data; external data and governing body minutes.
- Formal discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the governing body, four groups of students, recently qualified teachers, a representative of the local authority and the school’s external support partner.
- Additionally, informal discussions were held with students in lessons at lunchtime and at break times to gather their views about behaviour and their learning.
- A scrutiny of students’ work was carried out during lesson observations in all subjects and additionally as a separate exercise to judge students’ progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Inspectors analysed 57 responses to staff questionnaires, 61 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the information received from two emails from parents.

Inspection team

Colin Scott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cardinal Langley RC High School is a larger than average secondary school for students aged 11 to 18 serving the local communities of Middleton and North Manchester.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for extra support from the pupil premium funding is average. The pupil premium supports those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The school makes some use of a local college, Hopwood Hall, for a small number of students in Key Stage 4 to access alternative provision in vocational studies.
- The school is supported by the local authority and a partnership of local secondary schools, called the Pioneer Trust, for guidance and challenge.
- The headteacher has been in post for 18 months and has overseen comprehensive changes in personnel and the responsibilities of staff at all levels.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for Year 11 students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and leads to faster progress, particularly in mathematics, drama and geography by:
 - ensuring that the highest ability students are challenged more and so gain the highest grades possible, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers are able to learn from the current good practice that already exists within the school, for example, in science, religious education and physical education
 - ensuring that teachers inspire and excite students by setting tasks and activities that stretch and challenge them to deepen their understanding and secure their knowledge
 - insisting that teachers always set high expectations of their students, for example, in the pride students show in their books
 - ensuring that students of all abilities are encouraged to do their very best at all times, for example, in lower ability groups in English,
 - providing further support for numeracy in subjects across the curriculum so that the currently widening gap between disadvantaged students and others in mathematics is reversed.
- Continue to close the gaps in achievement between groups of students including those of different abilities.
- Improve teachers' marking and assessment by:
 - tackling inconsistencies in the standards of marking across subjects and between some teachers within subjects
 - ensuring that marking is accurate, timely, and provides information and guidance to help students to rapidly improve
 - further developing the checking of students' work so that all teachers are accountable in their marking
 - giving students opportunities through marking to respond to any support and guidance given to them by their teachers.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The relatively new headteacher and his evolving senior leadership team are quickly grasping the priorities of the school to support higher standards and improve student progress. Leaders are now well focussed on the progress individual students make in all subjects in addition to the headline examination figures, which are higher than average.
- Leaders have introduced new policies and procedures to ensure that teachers are held to account. These have already resulted in improvements in English, design and technology and religious education. Progress in mathematics is lagging behind that of other subjects because leaders initially tackled literacy aspects of learning first as an immediate school priority. The astute head of department in mathematics is working extremely hard to make rapid improvements in the subject and there are early signs that this work is already having a positive impact in Years 7 and 8. However, the positive effects are not yet seen in Years 10 and 11.
- Support for new members of staff is strong. All new staff have undergone extensive training and certification in the 'outstanding teacher programme' which they say they relished. Newly qualified staff recognise that they are 'supported well to get off to a good start in teaching'
- The leadership of teaching is further developing so that there is now a greater awareness of the quality of teaching across all areas of the school. This inspection confirms that those in charge of teaching are aware of where the greatest needs exist. A comprehensive system for managing teacher's performance ensures that leaders understand the standards and quality of teaching across the school. Where leaders have historically prioritised improvements in teaching in subjects, for instance in religious education and English, success rates have improved. Similarly, recent improvements in teaching in design and technology are also leading to higher achievement. These demonstrate that the school's actions can result in improvement. Leaders have already begun a drive for improvement in mathematics, having now secured key improvements in literacy.
- Middle leaders, both long established and those new to role, work collegiately and passionately together. They support each other very effectively.
- Leaders at all levels know the progress of students well. They use this information to inform priorities and check on progress. However, some teachers do not use this information as well as their leaders. When this is the case, students' rates of progress are slower due to inappropriate levels of challenge.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students well overall and is skilfully designed to keep students interested in their time in school. Students say that there is ample choice for them and that they enjoy their learning. Due to improved literacy, all students can now fully access learning across all subject areas. Both the academic curriculum and the many activities outside of school hours prepare students well for life in modern Britain, for example, the school teaches students about democracy and the values that guide people in their lives. In addition, there are chances for sixth form students to be directly responsible for supporting different charities.
- Leaders monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of pupils attending alternative provision well, ensuring that they are safe at all times.
- There is strong support for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of students. There are many opportunities for students to participate in fund-raising and for them to take direct responsibility in projects supporting local people, for example the annual Christmas pensioners' dinner. As a result of the ethos of the school, the drive of leaders and the support for SMSC in all subject areas and around the school, students have developed into young people who have positive consideration for others, regardless of backgrounds, beliefs or lifestyles.
- School leaders at all levels promote an ethos of calm and empathy. Students and staff respond well to this, knowing that they will be cared for and supported by their leaders. Leaders successfully promote good relations between students and with adults. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupil premium funding has been used increasingly well. Funding has been used both to support students' improved attendance and programmes to tackle school leavers not in employment, education or training. All students eligible for this funding in Year 11 in 2014 went on to employment, education or training.
- Parents and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of leaders and the established ethos of the school. They say that the school is led and managed well.
- The local authority works with the school and offers further commissioned support through the local partnership of secondary schools, the 'Pioneer Trust', which school leaders welcome and respond to. The challenge offered through the Trust has already rightly identified particular areas of need, such as the progress students make in mathematics.

- The school ensures that safeguarding procedures are in place, meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. The governing body has evolved over recent years, becoming astute and increasingly challenging to school leaders, effectively holding them to account.
 - The governing body understands the particular challenges the school faces with regard to students' progress. Governors' knowledge of school data and how the school performs in comparison to others is acute.
 - Governors monitor the quality of teaching and performance management well, ensuring that teachers progress through the pay scale only when it is appropriate. Staff who do not meet targets are further supported by leaders and governors check on that progress and tackle any underperformance effectively.
 - The governing body monitors pupil premium funding closely and they hold school leaders to account for its spending and impact.
 - Governors are passionate about the school. The drive and enthusiasm of the Chair of the Governing Body helps to ensure a clear sense of purpose and direction.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students' understanding of different faiths, cultures, backgrounds and beliefs is strong. They demonstrate exemplary empathy for the views and lifestyles of others.
- The overwhelming majority of both staff and parents believe that behaviour is managed well across the school.
- Students' attitudes to learning are mostly good and in lessons they demonstrate clear respect for teachers and the tasks they are carrying out. However, in some lessons where there are slower rates of progress, the quality of their work in students' books indicates that they take less pride in their learning.
- During the inspection there was a calm and positive atmosphere throughout the school and students say that this is typical. They say that disruption to learning through low-level misbehaviour in lessons is rare, but does occasionally happen.
- Both students and staff are extremely courteous and respectful of each other across all areas of the school. Students are often seen in lessons supporting their peers to improve their work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The majority of students interviewed believed that bullying is rare, but when it does happen it is dealt with swiftly by school staff. Students have a thorough understanding of all types of bullying and know how to report something, should it occur. Logs that record any incidents of bullying are well kept.
- Procedures to check the credentials of staff are exemplary and the records of these are well maintained.
- Attendance is now average after improving over recent years. The proportion of students who are regularly absent is reducing as a result of the work of leaders to promote attendance, improve the curriculum and ensure that students enjoy their time in school.
- Students who attend alternative off-site provision are looked after well and accurate records are kept of their attendance. The school ensures that they attend and behave well.
- Students are keenly aware of how to keep safe in practical lessons, at other times during the school day and when using online technologies at home and in school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not enabled students in Key Stages 3 and 4 to make good progress and achieve well from their starting points, particularly in mathematics. While teaching is starting to improve, it is not yet consistently good. This is particularly the case with the learning of the most able students in mathematics and for some lower ability groups in English.
- Teaching does not always match the needs of students well. Teachers sometimes do not challenge

students sufficiently to do well or set high enough expectations. As a consequence, some students make slower progress than might be expected.

- Marking and assessment remain a school priority. Leaders acknowledge that there is still variability in the standards of marking within and between subjects. This affects students' ability to respond to challenge and make faster progress. Marking is not always accurate, timely or gives specific information and guidance to help students to improve rapidly. Not all teachers are accountable in their marking. A significant minority of students in some lessons have too little pride in their work. This is contributed to by teachers' inadequate checking of work in students' books. Where marking is less effective, it is evident that students are not always secure in their learning, do not have a deep understanding of concepts or do not have respect for their own work.
- Students say that in some lessons they receive good verbal feedback when teachers check on their progress. However, this verbal feedback does not always result in students remembering or understanding what they need to do to improve. As a result, they do not always make as rapid progress as possible.
- Teaching often supports the development of students' literacy and reading skills in various subjects effectively.
- However, this is not always the case for the support of numeracy. This has already been identified by school leaders who have made support for mathematics a priority.
- The use of other adults across the school, for example teaching assistants, is good, and they are deployed well. They know their students and work in harmony with the teacher to ensure the best support for students in the classroom.
- The quality of teaching in many areas, such as science and physical education, is high. These subjects have some of the highest results and fastest rates of progress across the school. Students are consistently challenged, excited and inspired in these lessons. Recent improvements in English and religious education have also begun to result in much higher standards.
- The good relationships established between teachers and students ensure that students are comfortable in talking to their teachers and asking questions. Teachers regularly move around in class to check on students' progress, and to help them keep focused and on task.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In Year 11 in 2014, in the nationally published data, students' attainment was above average, with 61% attaining five or more good passes in GCSE examinations. However, too few students attained the highest grades in mathematics compared to their attainment in other subjects, such as science or physical education. This demonstrates that the most able are not achieving as well as they should in mathematics. Specifically, only 8% of students achieved the highest grades in mathematics, compared to 24% in core science and 26% in English literature.
- School leaders' own data, supported by inspection evidence, demonstrates that in mathematics rates of progress overall are not as strong as they should be. However, progress rates in mathematics are faster this year in Year 7 and Year 8.
- Disabled students and those with a special educational need are supported well in their learning and the progress they make from their starting points overall is good as a result of the support they receive.
- In the nationally published data on Year 11 in 2014, an above average proportion of students reached the expected levels in English, but the proportion doing so in mathematics was below average. The proportion of students making more than expected progress was also higher in English than in mathematics. When students sat GCSE examinations again, using the best entry figures not shown in public data, the results rose slightly overall, with the exception of those students making more than expected progress in mathematics. The most able students failed to improve their progress in mathematics.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students requires improvement. In Year 11 in 2014, disadvantaged students were, on average, over a full GCSE grade in mathematics behind other students nationally and in the school. School leaders are taking swift action to address this through improved use of pupil premium funding. In Year 11 in 2014, the gap in attainment in English narrowed. Disadvantaged students were half a GCSE grade behind other students nationally and about two-thirds of a grade behind others in the school.
- The standards reached by students in some other subjects such as geography, drama and design and technology in the 2014 GCSE examinations were not as high as would be expected, given students' achievements in other subjects, and were much lower than national figures.
- In some subjects, such as science and physical education, students achieve well and standards are significantly above expectations.

- Students who attend some vocational lessons in alternative provision continue to make progress in line with their in-school peers; some make good progress, for others progress is not so strong.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Leadership of the sixth form is good and results in a strong profile of success. Outcomes in the sixth form are better than those seen the main school
- Students in the sixth form achieve well in both AS and A-Level examinations. The majority of students who stay on at the school's own sixth form are those who attain broadly average results in GCSE examinations, but the majority leave with standards above average. This demonstrates the good progress they make. Students achieve particularly well in vocational studies in the sixth form, producing results well above the national average
- The school has successfully persuaded more and more students to study in the school's own sixth form rather than study elsewhere. Numbers have now risen to over 150.
- The curriculum offer is wide and is also helps to attract students to stay on in education. The majority of students who enter Year 12 are those who attain broadly average results at GCSE examinations. However, the school is successfully managing to recruit higher-ability students, due to the variety of subjects on offer and concerted action by the relatively new and effective sixth form leadership.
- Retention rates across AS and A-Level studies are high and very few leave during their studies.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is stronger than in the main school and is good over time. Teaching is particularly effective in physical education and other vocational studies.
- Sixth form students speak highly of their teachers and feel extremely valued by the school. They are given many responsibilities, for instance, organising and running community events and fund-raising activities, which they relish.
- Students in the sixth form are prepared well for their future in either higher education or in employment. They are well-rounded individuals who demonstrate great care and respect for others. Students behave well and leaders ensure that they are kept safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105844
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	461778

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,070
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Oliver
Headteacher	Andrew Bridson
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2012
Telephone number	0161 643 4009
Fax number	0871 994 1804
Email address	admin@clrchs.co.uk

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