

# Cardinal Langley Roman Catholic High School

Rochdale Road, Middleton, Manchester M24 2GL

## Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher's leadership is strong and effective. He has developed a strong team of leaders, which has enhanced the school's capacity for improvement. Senior leaders provide good support and challenge for staff.
- Teaching overall is good. As a result, most pupils currently in the school are making good progress from their starting points. Pupils achieve well in most subjects across the curriculum. In English and mathematics, their progress is improving rapidly.
- Leaders have very effectively planned the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the differences between the achievement of these pupils and that of their peers are diminishing rapidly.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are safe and happy in school. The school is a harmonious community where pupils show good respect for one another and for staff.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. The great majority have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and take pride in their work. Leaders have successfully reduced exclusions and raised attendance this year.
- Leadership in the sixth form is good. Students achieve very well in applied subjects. Students' achievement in academic subjects is rising strongly.
- Governors make a strong contribution to the school. They are well informed and hold senior leaders firmly to account for the quality of education provided. Governors support the school proactively.
- Although the teaching of mathematics has improved under the direction of a new subject leader, it is not yet consistently effective.
- The key stage 3 curriculum is not currently well planned and does not enable pupils to make good progress in all subjects.
- Teaching in some subjects in Years 7 and 8 does not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing work with disadvantaged pupils to ensure that differences in achievement between this group and other pupils nationally diminish further.
- Raise levels of challenge for the most able pupils, especially in Years 7 and 8.
- Take further measures to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics.
- Share the good practice already evident in the school and consolidate approaches to teaching and learning to ensure that most teaching matches the quality of the best.
- Ensure that the curriculum and organisation of subjects in key stage 3 enable all pupils to make the best possible progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. He has tackled the areas for development raised in the previous inspection with determination and rigour. As a result, the school has improved significantly. Governors and representatives from the Salford Diocese and the local authority told inspectors that there is no complacency. The great majority of parents and staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires are supportive of the headteacher and his senior team.
- The headteacher has developed a strong team of senior leaders who have enhanced the school's capacity for sustained improvement. They work well together as a team and provide effective support and challenge to teachers and middle leaders. Staff at all levels fully understand what leaders expect of them and the great majority meet these expectations. Senior leaders take robust action to challenge and support colleagues who do not meet expected standards.
- The school has a strong team of subject leaders. In most subjects, teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Recent leadership appointments in English and mathematics have strengthened these two departments significantly. As a result, teaching in English and mathematics has improved and pupils are now making much better progress. The mathematics leader, for instance, has put in place a range of strategies and systems which are assisting teachers to improve their teaching and assessment.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is strong. The senior leader responsible has developed a systematic and effective approach to monitoring and improving teaching. She has successfully integrated professional development activities with teachers' performance management, which encourages teachers to develop their practice. As a result, teaching has improved significantly over the last two years. Several teachers told inspectors that they welcome this collaborative approach. Leaders use appraisal effectively to improve staff performance and they and governors do not approve pay rises where performance does not merit this.
- Senior leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school robustly. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they visit lessons regularly and frequently examine the quality of work in pupils' books. Senior leaders regularly meet with subject leaders to hold them to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their subjects.
- The school's use of its pupil premium funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is particularly effective. Leaders undertook research into the localities where the pupils come from and, as a result, have been able to personalise their approaches to supporting these groups of pupils and tackling their barriers to learning. Consequently, the differences between the achievement of these pupils and that of their peers are diminishing rapidly.
- Leaders use funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well to ensure that they are fully supported. The school makes effective use of its Year 7 catch-up funding to support pupils whose English and mathematics scores were low

at primary school and most pupils on this programme make good progress.

- Leaders have created a harmonious ethos in which pupils feel safe and happy. Pupils' behaviour is good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are strong. Pupils support one another collaboratively. For example, sixth-form students regularly guide pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities around the building, ensuring that they are comfortable and feel well cared for.
- Over recent years, the rate of exclusions and the persistent absence of some groups of pupils had been too high. This year, leaders have taken concerted action to address these two problems. They have been very successful in raising attendance and have significantly reduced the numbers of exclusions.
- The school's curriculum at key stage 4 is broad and balanced. Leaders have planned bespoke pathways to allow pupils of different abilities to succeed in a range of suitable options. For example, lower-ability pupils follow a suite of courses, including vocational subjects, which build in experience of work and which prepare them effectively for possible follow-up study post-16.
- There is a suitable focus on subjects in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and the school is steadily increasing the numbers of pupils entering and passing this suite of academic qualifications. However, take-up of modern foreign languages at key stage 4 is low.
- The school's two-year key stage 3 curriculum is currently not well organised and does not allow pupils to make good progress in all subjects. In modern foreign languages, for instance, pupils change the language they are learning part way through Year 8, which limits the progress they make in both their first and second language. Leaders are aware of this and have decided to change this arrangement from next academic year. Year 8 pupils who opt not to take a language in key stage 4 are currently taught a range of cultural aspects about the countries where their foreign language is spoken; this programme lacks challenge and rigour. In design and technology, pupils gain experience of several aspects of technology, but in some cases they do not have the time to study the aspect in sufficient depth.
- The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, such as sports clubs and the wind band and guitar club. Pupils also take part in theatre visits, visits to art galleries and museums and study visits to France and Spain.
- Leaders work well with officers of the local authority and receive good support.
- The school's website largely meets requirements. However, the mandatory information report on pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities omits some key information, for example on how adaptations are made to the curriculum and the learning environment for pupils who have special educational needs.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is strong and effective.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They hold leaders and managers firmly to account and ask challenging questions about pupils' progress. They regularly review pupils' performance data, so they have a sound awareness of how well pupils are performing and where the priorities for development

lie.

- Governors support the school whenever they can. For example, they all serve as 'link governors' to departments or key sections of the school. One governor told an inspector how he regularly visits his link department, meets with the staff and the subject leader and also looks at pupils' work. This gives him a good insight into how effective the department is and where it might need support. Another governor has been supporting the recently appointed leader of mathematics and fully understands the challenges he has faced.
- Governors bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the governing body. They play a key role in setting the vision and direction of the school. They have a good knowledge of the school's finances. Governors check that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used appropriately.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's website fully meets requirements.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- The school's safeguarding policies and practices are strong. Leaders actively promote a culture of vigilance where pupils' safety and welfare are paramount. Safeguarding and child protection are very high priorities.
- The school has rigorous checking procedures in place for child protection. All staff have been trained in safeguarding and child protection and they know what to do if a child is at risk. All staff are required to report even the slightest concern in order to protect pupils and these are followed up meticulously by key workers. Record-keeping is thorough.
- Staff have had training on 'Prevent', the government's programme for preventing radicalisation and extremism, and staff training on safeguarding is kept up to date.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example through e-safety initiatives. The school has filters in place to prevent inappropriate internet usage and the system is monitored robustly.
- Governors are suitably trained in safeguarding and in the safe recruitment of new staff.
- The school works effectively with parents and external agencies to keep pupils secure and safe from harm.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Most teaching seen during this inspection was effective and work seen in pupils' books, in a range of subjects across the curriculum, also showed that teaching is typically good. Pupils told inspectors that the teaching they receive is usually good. As a result of stronger teaching, most groups of pupils currently in school are now making faster progress.
- Leaders have invested much time and energy in developing the quality of teaching as a priority. They ensure that the great majority of teachers attend programmes to help improve teaching, and in mathematics the new leader has set up his own 'outstanding

mathematics teacher programme' for all his staff. The school has appointed 'lead practitioners' in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. These colleagues help to model good practice and coach their colleagues. Leaders have successfully eradicated any inadequate teaching. They take firm action where teaching does not meet required standards. The impact of all this work is now being seen in improving pupils' progress.

- The school has strong teaching in history, science, physical education, information and communication technology (ICT) and increasingly in English, where six teachers are examiners for the examination board. Where teaching is successful, it is often typified by high levels of challenge. In a Year 8 history lesson, for example, pupils were working with real interest on the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany; they asked intelligent, high-level questions. When the inspector suggested to a group of pupils in this lesson that their teacher obviously had high expectations of the class, a pupil replied, 'Yes, and we always meet them!'
- The school works successfully to promote and develop pupils' reading. All Year 7 pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure and to swap the books they have bought with others. Leaders have established a coordinated approach to developing pupils' numeracy and literacy. Numeracy activities, for example, are covered regularly in form time. However, leaders' evaluation of the impact of their work to improve Year 7 pupils' literacy and numeracy skills currently lacks rigour.
- Pupils behaved well in most lessons observed, showing positive interest in their work and good application. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are generally very positive. Most pupils take a pride in their work and look after their books.
- Both English and mathematics departments suffered from significant staffing turbulence last year. As a result, the school had to rely on too many temporary teachers and Year 11 outcomes were thus significantly below average in both subjects. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour can be unsettled in classes taught by temporary teachers. This year, although several new teachers have been appointed to teach English and mathematics, both departments are much more stable. English teaching is improving strongly. Mathematics teaching overall is also improving, but it is not yet consistently effective across the department and does not promote pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills sufficiently.
- Teachers mainly have high expectations of their pupils. Levels of challenge are generally high and the work seen in pupils' books echoed this. Pupils in key stage 4 confirmed that they are usually challenged sufficiently. However, leaders acknowledge that levels of challenge for the most able pupils in Years 7 and 8 are sometimes not high enough and that this is a priority for the school to develop. Wisely, the headteacher had recently called on some of his primary headteacher colleagues to review some Year 7 work, to ensure that teachers were pitching new schemes of learning at the right level and building on what primary pupils had already done. The primary colleagues reported that some English and mathematics work was set at too low a standard.
- Inspectors noticed instances where pupils could have been asked to think about topics in greater depth. Where this occurred, teachers' questions were sometimes too simplistic and did not extend pupils' thinking or deepen their understanding of key

concepts. On occasion, teachers tended to let boys dominate answers to questions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and they know how to stay safe, including online. They know how to protect themselves from radicalisation and from exploitation. Pupils who met inspectors said that bullying is rare and that staff deal with it effectively if it ever arises. Some pupils have been appointed as 'guardian angels', who actively support others if there are bullying or relationships issues. The school has recorded few bullying incidents this year. Pupils said that there is little racism or homophobic bullying and school records confirm this. Relationships between pupils are generally strong. A minority of pupils who responded to the online questionnaire felt that bullying can sometimes be a problem, but inspectors found no firm evidence to support this view.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly and are courteous and respectful. Their positive attitudes help to create and maintain the school's harmonious ethos. Most pupils take pride in their work, and the majority respond to teachers' feedback on their work with care and attention, which helps to move their learning on.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. In their 'life skills' lessons and in religious education, pupils reflect on their own beliefs and those of other cultures and religions. They cover a range of topics, such as active citizenship, individual rights and responsibilities and the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Pupils have the opportunity to attend a religious retreat and to take part in cultural visits, for example to art galleries and theatres. Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, and last year pupils took part in a mock European Union election. Pupils often proactively participate in charity events.
- Pupils receive effective careers advice and guidance throughout the school from Year 7 to Year 13. This enables them to develop a good understanding of the broad range of careers open to them. The programme is comprehensive and well managed, although leaders do not yet fully evaluate its impact. It frequently involves employers in talking with pupils and also uses the experience of ex-pupils to talk about their career choices. The school ensures that vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are fully involved; the most able disadvantaged pupils told an inspector that their participation in a local trust programme has boosted their confidence enormously, and one pupil said, 'It has given us hope for the future.'

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During the inspection, pupils moved around the school site responsibly and maturely, and they behaved well at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good and the great majority arrive at lessons punctually and are ready and willing to learn. A small minority of staff who completed

the online questionnaire complained that behaviour around school is sometimes not good, and a few pupils who responded also felt this was the case, especially when temporary teachers are involved. However, inspectors' evidence from first-hand observation, from discussions with leaders, teachers and pupils and from a scrutiny of school records showed that behaviour is typically good. Governors have also observed very good behaviour on their regular visits to the school.

- This year the school introduced its new 'behaviour hub', which is a fully staffed internal unit where pupils who misbehave spend a short time working away from their peers but with support and challenge from staff. Allied to the more consistent application by staff of the school's behaviour policy, the use of this unit has had the effect of improving behaviour across the school. Whereas numbers of exclusions in recent years had been too high, this year the school has significantly reduced the numbers of pupils excluded, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school has enhanced the range and extent of its strategies to improve attendance and leaders monitor their impact closely. Firm action taken with parents whose children are often absent, together with close liaison with the local authority, have resulted in a significant reduction in persistent absence this year, including for groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance was low previously. Overall attendance is now close to national averages and is improving.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In 2015, the school's published GCSE results appeared very low for English. In fact, pupils achieved reasonable outcomes but new national discounting rules, whereby only a pupil's first examination entry in English language or literature counted in the performance tables, meant that many of the school's achievements in English were not actually taken into account. The school was unwittingly disadvantaged by the new rules.
- In 2016, the school rectified the problem in English. Unfortunately, staffing turbulence in both the English and mathematics departments during the year meant that the school had to call on a number of temporary teachers in these two subjects. Partly as a result, outcomes in English and mathematics in 2016 fell well below national averages.
- In most other subjects, however, performance in 2016 was good. The rates of progress made by pupils in the majority of subjects were stronger than were achieved nationally. As a result, the school's Progress 8 score (the new national measure by which secondary school performance is assessed) was in line with national figures. Pupils attained well in science and made very good progress in humanities, especially in history. Their performance in the 'open element', where pupils have a choice of a range of subjects beyond the compulsory core, was also very strong.
- Inspection evidence showed that current Year 11 pupils are making strong progress. Pupils are expected to achieve GCSE outcomes in English and mathematics in 2017 which will be well above recent national averages. School data also shows that the good progress made by pupils in many subjects last year has been maintained with current pupils and will continue to improve. Most subjects are again expected to perform above national averages in 2017. Good work seen in pupils' books, and in



most lessons, confirmed that the school's assessments are valid and that most pupils, especially the least able and middle-ability pupils, are making better than average progress. The most able pupils are making the progress expected of them.

- Pupils in Years 7 to 10 are generally making good progress, including in English and mathematics. The great majority, including the most able, are on track to achieve their targets or are already achieving them. Teaching in Years 7 and 8 sometimes does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils, however.
- The school makes good use of its pupil premium funding and has sound strategies in place to address the barriers to learning of disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils achieved approximately half a grade less on average across eight subjects than did their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. Low-ability pupils and the most able performed much less well than other pupils nationally. However, as a result of concerted and determined whole-school action by leaders and teachers, the disadvantaged cohorts are now performing much better and differences in achievement are diminishing. Both the least able and most able groups in Year 11, for instance, show significant improvement this year. Leaders acknowledge that they still have more work to do to ensure that differences in achievement continue to diminish. They fully understand the challenges that many of these pupils face and are determined to drive forward the school's efforts to improve their life chances.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is generally well used to improve the standards of literacy and numeracy of those pupils who arrive from primary school with low scores in their basic skills. Most are now making better progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support from their teachers and from teaching assistants. Most are making the progress expected of them.
- The school succeeds in getting very high proportions of pupils leaving Year 11 into further education, employment or training. In 2016, 98% of pupils went on to these destinations, which is above the national average.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leadership in the sixth form is good. The recently appointed leader has put in place strong systems, which are already having a positive impact on improved retention of students, improving attendance and stronger outcomes.
- The leader monitors teaching carefully and has devised professional development activities to raise expectations of teaching in post-16 classes. However, although inspectors observed some very effective teaching in the sixth form, this was not entirely consistent. In a few lessons, especially where students were revising for examinations, activities were sometimes not precisely focused to meet individual students' needs.
- Outcomes in applied general subjects at A level or its equivalent have been strong over several years, and this was again the case in 2016. Outcomes in academic A levels have generally been close to national averages, although the starting points of students taking these courses have generally been lower than found nationally. In 2016, however, students in several A-level and AS-level subjects made less progress

than students nationally.

- The leader of the sixth form recognised that the school had not applied sufficient rigour in recruiting students to post-16 courses. He has taken steps to address this by raising entry requirements, ensuring that students taking up academic courses have GCSE grades which will enable them to cope with the stringent demands of A level. As a result, outcomes in academic subjects are improving rapidly this year. School figures and externally published assessments show that students' achievement in most subjects will rise above national averages in 2017.
- A few students resit English or mathematics GCSEs in the sixth form. Success rates for pupils achieving a good pass in English are good. They had been more varied in mathematics due to a fragmented timetable in previous years. The leader of the sixth form has now ensured that the mathematics group has a dedicated mathematics teacher, which is resulting in a greater proportion of students achieving a good pass.
- The post-16 curriculum offers students a broad range of academic and applied vocational choices. Retention from Year 12 into Year 13 is good and figures are rising. The school offers its students an extensive range of enrichment activities.
- Attendance in the sixth form has improved significantly this year. Leaders accept they still need to do more to improve it further. The leader is successfully improving the culture of learning. Many more students are attending study-support lessons in school, which reflects improved attitudes to learning generally. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on social media and the internet.
- Students receive very good careers education, advice and guidance, which supports them in making choices about universities or other routes. A high proportion of students move on to higher education. The most able students, including disadvantaged students, are following a specific programme which seeks to raise their aspirations. As a result, increasing numbers of students from this group, and also from the student body more generally, now gain places at prestigious universities.

## School details

Unique reference number	105844
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10032207

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,060
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Moore
Headteacher	Andrew Bridson
Telephone number	0161 643 4009
Website	<a href="http://www.clrchs.co.uk">www.clrchs.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@clrchs.co.uk">admin@clrchs.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 April 2015

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on its website regarding information about provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. There are significantly more girls than boys in the sixth form.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is low compared to national figures.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged is higher than the national average.

- The overall proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress across a number of subjects, including English and mathematics, by the end of Year 11.
- No pupils access alternative education provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons. They visited form time and an assembly and observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors evaluated pupils' work in lessons and scrutinised a sample of work provided by senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, class teachers and governors. The lead inspector also met with the director of education for the Diocese of Salford and with the school's local authority support officer.
- Inspectors met with four groups of pupils and sixth-formers formally and spoke with many more pupils and students informally. They took account of the 119 responses to the online pupil survey.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents. These included: the school's internal data which tracks pupils' achievement; development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; minutes of governing body meetings; school policies; safeguarding procedures and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's website to ensure that it met requirements.
- The team took account of the 120 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of the 28 free-text responses received from parents. Inspectors also took account of the 91 responses to the staff online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Clive Hurren, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Long	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Peckett	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Ofsted Inspector

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