

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School

Address: Potters Green Road, Coventry, West Midlands, CV2 2AJ

Unique reference number (URN): 141992

Inspection report: 14 April 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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Leaders have worked effectively over the last three years to improve pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils' attainment in national tests at the end of Year 11 is broadly in line with national averages. Similarly, pupils who are disadvantaged as well as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well, and in line with their peers. As a result, pupils are generally well prepared for their next steps and are ready to access ambitious destinations.

Typically pupils take pride in their work and endeavour to do their best, although there can be some variation in this. The school gives appropriate support to those pupils who need to secure the foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is rightly proud of how well pupils in key stage 3 have caught up with their reading knowledge. This helps them to become fluent readers. Leaders are planning to extend this to older pupils.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have worked effectively to improve pupils' attendance. With support from the trust, leaders now take a more systematic approach to attendance. For example, leaders now identify and remove barriers to attendance for pupils more precisely. This work has had a notable impact. Pupils' attendance has improved noticeably for the school as a whole and for groups of pupils who might find it harder to attend regularly. Consequently, it is now very close to the national average. Similarly, persistent absence is close to the national average. Leaders are prioritising improvements in pupils' punctuality and this work is beginning to have impact.

Due to leaders' high expectations for behaviour, pupils conduct themselves well across the school. This is because pupils know and understand how they should behave towards each other. Typically, pupils try hard in lessons. Classrooms are calm places where pupils can focus on their learning. At social times, pupils are respectful and polite. They show consideration towards each other and to visitors. In this diverse school pupils celebrate difference and know that discrimination of any sort is wrong. They fully understand that bullying is not tolerated. Leaders provide appropriate support to those pupils who might find it more challenging to meet their high expectations for conduct.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders work effectively to identify and meet the needs of pupils who have barriers to their learning. This includes many different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. There are also a significant number of pupils who are known to social care. Leaders have well-considered and appropriate support in place for these pupils and this is reflected in their high-quality personal education plans. Pupils with SEND have helpful 'passports' that outline clearly the strategies which staff use well to reduce any barriers to learning. Leaders provide further support for pupils through the 'inclusion room' and 'St

Luke's room'. These provisions help pupils who face additional challenges to engage successfully with school life and learning.

Leaders regularly review the impact of additional funding such as the pupil premium for those pupils who are disadvantaged. They adopt suitable evidence-based strategies to help to minimise barriers to learning, attendance or participation in the life of the school for these pupils.

Where needed, leaders use alternative provision appropriately for a small number of pupils. They review these placements routinely to ensure these provisions meet pupils' needs as intended.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a very clear vision for the development of provision aligned to the school's values of knowledge, ambition, resilience and respect. They have already had a positive impact on improving standards at the school. For example, they have improved provision for the pupils' personal development, secured tangible improvements in attendance, and have also improved examination outcomes at the end of Year 11. Other strategic changes have been put in place to improve provision in the sixth form and to secure increased consistency in standards of teaching. These developments have yet to have the same impact.

The trust has been instrumental in supporting the school's development and in helping leaders to prioritise the most important improvements. Those responsible for governance have a deep commitment to the school and an appropriate understanding of its development. They provide helpful support and challenge to leaders. Leaders work closely with a number of schools in the local area and beyond in order to develop provision at Cardinal Wiseman. The school seeks regular external review of its work.

Staff speak highly of how leaders engage with them about workload and developments in the school. There is a suitable professional learning programme for staff at all stages of their careers to develop their practice. Parents and carers are positive about their child's experience at the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a comprehensive and coherently planned personal development programme. This includes a well sequenced personal, social and health education curriculum which pupils typically understand well. Pupils learn about important aspects such as healthy and respectful relationships in an age-appropriate way. They explore how to live healthy, fulfilling lives and how to keep themselves safe. This includes understanding online and offline risks to their wellbeing. Pupils are taught about other cultures and faith traditions. They also learn about fundamental British values such as democracy and tolerance to develop their understanding of life in modern Britain. Leaders enhance the personal development programme with a carefully selected range of external speakers who provide pupils with useful information about a variety of topics and experiences.

Pupils access a wide range of opportunities to develop their interests and talents. These include a number of clubs, musicals and trips that broaden pupils' cultural experiences.

Leaders carefully monitor the quality and impact of the personal development programme. They check that it meets pupils' needs consistently, regardless of their background or any barriers to learning they may face. Leaders also prioritise pastoral support for pupils. Staff are always on hand to help when pupils need it. Pupils speak positively about the encouragement and care they receive.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive careers programme. For example, pupils in Year 10 and students in Year 12 take part in work experience. There are also careers interviews and a range of visits. Together, these experiences prepare pupils effectively for future education, employment or training. Leaders are rightly proud of the destinations pupils secure when they leave. They take considerable care to ensure pupils receive the support they need to access ambitious next steps.

Needs attention

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The quality of the curriculum and teaching across subjects is too variable. This is due to a number of factors. There are inconsistencies in how well teachers check that pupils understand the key learning they need to secure. As a result, teachers do not use this information well enough to make changes to their teaching to address any misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively. Consequently, teachers do not move pupils on to more complex tasks to deepen their learning. In addition, sometimes, teachers do not successfully implement the agreed changes to activities for pupils with barriers to their learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. This means that some of these pupils continue to have challenges in learning the curriculum as leaders intend.

In a few subjects, leaders are in the process of redesigning the curriculum and organising the key knowledge that pupils need to remember in a clear and logical order. However, the curriculum is taught well in many subjects. Leaders ensure there is effective support for pupils in key stage 3 who are at the early stages of learning to read. Leaders are extending this provision to older pupils so that all pupils have essential knowledge which they need to access the curriculum successfully.

Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Over time, students' achievement in A-level subjects has been significantly below the national average. There are variations in how well the curriculum is implemented across different subjects. Additionally, students' misconceptions or gaps in knowledge are not always identified. This means that they find it difficult to build on their prior learning. As a result, some students are not as prepared for their next steps as they should be. Achievement in applied general qualifications is close to average. However, leaders have yet to have the same impact for the majority of students who study A levels.

Leaders are tackling these weaknesses directly. They now check the quality of the curriculum and teaching carefully, as well as the effectiveness of the support provided for

students. Recent improvements to the post-16 provision are beginning to have a positive impact. Leaders ensure students are on the correct courses for their interests and prior attainment. This includes those students who are new to the country and who have a personalised curriculum.

Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities that broaden their horizons. This includes high-quality advice and support for future destinations or employment. There is significant and targeted support for students who are disadvantaged which enables these students to participate fully in their studies and the wider life of the school.

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

Pupils enjoy their learning and typically do their best. This is because they are at the heart of this welcoming school. As pupils are very well known to staff in the school, barriers to learning or wellbeing are generally reduced. Although there are some inconsistencies in teaching in some subject areas, pupils of all backgrounds achieve well in their Year 11 examinations. Students in the sixth form benefit from thoughtful improvements to the provision and are proud to be part of this community. Those who study vocational courses achieve well. However, the A-level results are not yet high enough.

Pupils attend increasingly well as they understand how important this is. They value being part of Cardinal Wiseman and appreciate the wider experiences leaders provide. This includes taking part in an interesting range of visits, participating in the many sports teams including basketball, and the opportunity to support their peers. Pupils benefit from comprehensive and broad guidance to help them make decisions about their next steps. This enables them to access ambitious destinations. Pupils express pride in belonging to this inclusive community. This is because pupils of all backgrounds feel well supported and cared for by staff. This creates a harmonious and happy school in line with its ethos.

Pupils feel safe. They learn how to keep themselves safe in the wider community and how to live healthy lives. Pupils behave well. They know leaders' expectations for them and treat each other with respect. Consequently, the school is a calm and orderly place because pupils conduct themselves well. Pupils fully understand that bullying or any sort of discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is well sequenced and sets out clearly the key knowledge and skills pupils should learn and remember.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers effectively check pupils' understanding of the key knowledge they are expected to secure and use this information purposefully to identify and address any gaps, errors or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers implement the agreed adaptations to activities for pupils with barriers to their learning systematically and effectively.

- Leaders should further develop their work for students studying A-level courses in the sixth form to ensure they achieve highly.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Romero Catholic Academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen Quinn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Brendan Fawcett.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the principal, senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with representatives from the board of trustees, the local governing body, trust employees including the CEO, and a representative of the archdiocese.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2025.

The school currently makes use of 6 registered alternative provisions.

Since the last inspection a new principal has been appointed. Several other leaders are also new to the school or newly appointed.

Laura Burtonwood: Principal

Lead inspector:

Andrew Madden, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Martin Spoor, Ofsted Inspector

Jacqueline Newsome, Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Wells, Ofsted Inspector

Ezran Little, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Howes, 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 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,439

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,416

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

36.90%

Above 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

1.81%

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: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.68%

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

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

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 (revised)	45.9%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	36.0%	45.3%	Below

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 (revised)	46.6	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.3	46.3	Below

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)	-0.05	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.17	-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 (revised)	33.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.7%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	23.8%	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 (revised)	40.3	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	35.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.5	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)	-0.75	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.69	-0.57	Close to average

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 (revised)	33.8%	53.1%	-19.3 pp
2023/24 (final)	38.7%	53.1%	-14.5 pp
2022/23 (final)	23.8%	52.4%	-28.7 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 (revised)	40.3	50.4	-10.2
2023/24 (final)	35.0	50.0	-15.0
2022/23 (final)	32.5	50.3	-17.8

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)	-0.75	0.16	-0.92
2022/23 (final)	-0.69	0.17	-0.86

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 (provisional)	90%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	87%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	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 (revised)	29.56	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.54	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.09	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 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

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 (2 term)	10.0%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.2%	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 (2 term)	25.7%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	28.0%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	32.6%	26.5%	Above

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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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