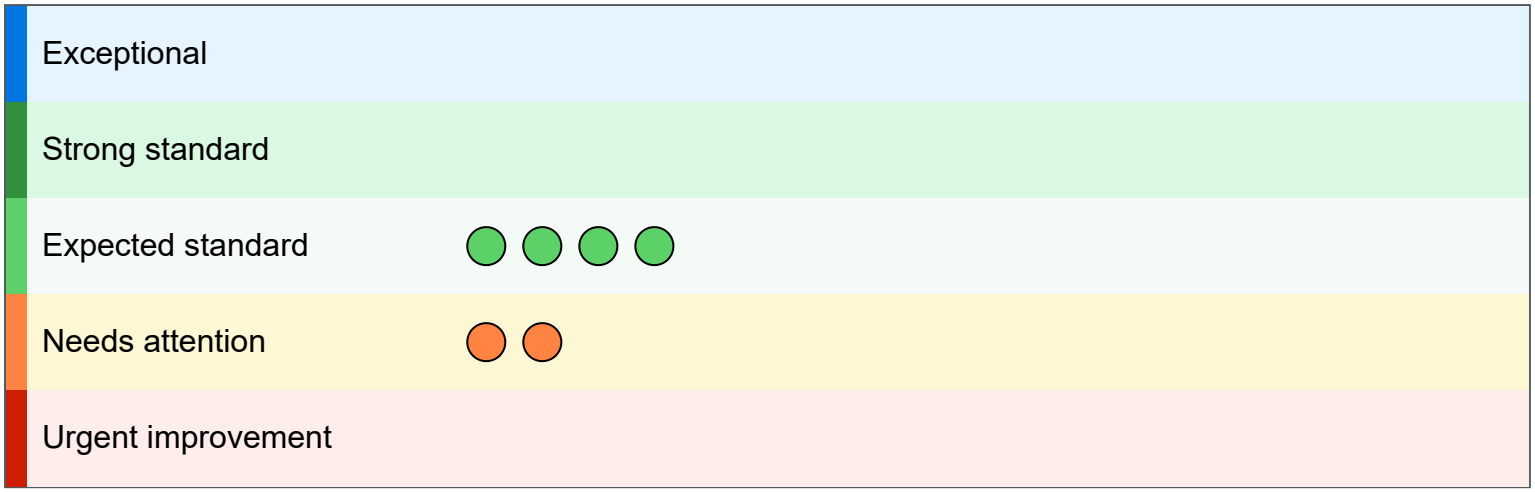
Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood

Address: Melbourne Avenue, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8AY

Unique reference number (URN): 119799

Inspection report: 21 April 2026



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

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have prioritised attendance. They track and analyse attendance data effectively. As a result, leaders are able to apply effective interventions for specific pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has contributed to a sustained improvement in attendance over time. Leaders work with families to reduce pupils' barriers to attendance with bespoke strategies. This is having a positive impact.

Leaders have overseen an improvement in behaviour over time. This is due to leaders' accurate tracking and analysis of behavioural trends. As a result, the school has seen a decline in suspensions and permanent exclusions. With clear, well-embedded routines, pupils enjoy a safe, calm culture of learning built on positive relationships with their peers and teachers. At social times, pupils show high levels of respect. Pupils access the learning in classrooms with minimal disruption. However, some pupils do not always show pride in their work. Any bullying or discriminatory language is dealt with swiftly, contributing to a secure culture in school. Approaches to dealing with behaviour are suitably adapted for pupils with additional needs to ensure that they receive effective support.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

In recent years, leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well structured and sequenced. It is complemented with staff who have secure subject knowledge. Pupils are able to recall previous knowledge confidently. Leaders are aware of the areas in the curriculum that are not achieving well. They have implemented appropriate steps to support further improvements. For example, leaders have introduced a policy to develop the quality and accuracy of assessment across the curriculum. However, the implementation of some new approaches are embedded in some curriculum areas more than others. This results in some inconsistency in the quality of teaching.

Teachers employ effective teaching and learning styles to explain new concepts for pupils. This includes a focus on how pupils learn effectively to support pupils to broaden their knowledge. Teachers are aware of pupils' needs and, in most cases, make suitable adaptations in the classroom. This results in pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learning effectively alongside their peers.

Leaders quickly identify pupils who need additional support with reading, writing, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. These pupils benefit from focused interventions, which are increasingly effective in beginning to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy. As a result, more pupils are able to access the full curriculum and learn well.

Inclusion

Expected standard

The school's ambition for all pupils to be equally included in all aspects of school life is championed by all staff. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. Staff provide effective support that enables pupils to access

the full curriculum. Most teachers make skilful adaptations and deploy adult 'key workers' carefully when pupils need extra help.

Pupils’ needs are known to staff. Leaders review pupils’ provision and adapt strategies regularly when necessary. This ensures that additional support continues to reduce pupils’ barriers to learning. This approach extends outside of the classroom to ensure that all vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, participate in wider school life.

Leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. They review the achievement of disadvantaged pupils closely and use this information to design precise support for pupils. They regularly check the impact of their actions and seek advice and support from external professionals, when required.

Alternative provision is used appropriately to support some pupils who need more specialist help. Leaders ensure that these pupils successfully reintegrate to school as soon as they are ready.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders at all levels have pupils at the heart of their approach to leading this school. Since the last inspection, leaders have identified and prioritised important areas of improvement. For example, they have successfully improved the attendance and behaviour of pupils. Leaders are positive role models for staff and pupils. They are proud of their contributions to the school's journey of development.

Leaders are proactive in identifying new and emerging challenges for the school. They focus their attention on these areas. For example, leaders have identified underachievement in some curriculum areas as a priority. They have implemented strategies to address this underachievement. However, these initiatives are being adopted and embedded by curriculum areas at different rates.

Leaders are supported by well-experienced governors who have relevant expertise in the education sector. They are proactively involved in school life. This allows them to provide appropriate challenge and support, which shapes leaders’ strategic direction for the school.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership and feel well supported. They receive a range of professional development opportunities that are pertinent to their roles. This includes early career teachers who also benefit from research-led training. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload.

Leaders have strengthened their relationship with parents and carers. Pupils and parents are largely positive about the school. Leaders work closely with external organisations engaging with local professional networks. They share good practice with other schools.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Leaders’ actions to strengthen the curriculum have led to improvements in the quality of pupils’ work in some curriculum areas. However, this work is not fully embedded and is not a consistent picture of secure improvement across the whole curriculum and for all groups of pupils. In particular, pupils with higher starting points do not achieve as well in the classroom. This is also reflected in national assessments and examinations.

The attainment of most pupils in national examinations remains below their peers nationally. Disadvantaged pupils and those with lower starting points usually achieve in line with the average for similar pupils nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points. Generally, pupils move on to suitable next steps when they leave the school.

The school's ongoing work to improve pupils' learning of important knowledge and skills in English and mathematics is enabling more pupils to make positive progress through the broader curriculum.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention

Pupils do not develop sufficient depth of understanding about some important aspects of life in modern Britain. Leaders have a robust understanding of the quality of the personal development curriculum and have reshaped the curriculum and the way it is taught. However, these changes have not led to pupils securing a deep understanding of important concepts such as fundamental British values.

The school’s personal, social, health and economic education and citizenship curriculum is responsive to the needs of pupils. Leaders have started conducting audits to check the effectiveness of the curriculum. For example, feedback from leaders' discussions with pupils identified financial literacy as a valued topic. As a result, leaders have revised the curriculum to ensure that financial literacy is given further prominence. Leaders ensure that the school’s relationships and sex education and health education is age-appropriate and delivered by staff who have expertise in this subject. This ensures that pupils have the knowledge they need to keep safe and stay healthy.

Pupils have a wide offer of extra-curricular activities to build their talents and interests. They participate in international visits. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, including through participating and achieving success in a range of local events and competitions. For example, pupils recently took part in and won a local history debating competition. Pupils are given the chance to hold democratically elected leadership roles, which support pupils to build their confidence and broaden their experience. For example, reading buddies and antibullying mentors are trained and take on the responsibility to support their peers.

The school provides suitable careers education from Year 7. It is designed to raise pupils' aspirations. Disadvantaged pupils are prioritised and an increasing number of pupils pursue positive next steps in further education, employment or training after leaving the school.

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

Pupils at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School thrive in a culture of warm relationships rooted in Catholic values. The school has a calm, purposeful environment that has improved over time. Pupils treat others with care and respect creating a safe, enjoyable space for learning. Pupils' behaviour is tracked rigorously, and leaders act on trends effectively. This contributes to a reduction in sanctions, such as suspensions and permanent exclusions. All pupils have a trusted adult they can share their concerns with. They are confident that leaders deal with any instances of bullying or discriminatory language. Pupils attend school regularly. This is due to an improving curriculum as well as leaders' rigorous work with pupils and their families to reduce barriers to attendance.

Staff identify disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders support these pupils with appropriate strategies, which reduce their barriers to learning. They also put in place strategies to reduce pupils' barriers to wider school life.

Pupils experience inconsistent, but improving teaching and learning practices in the classroom. In lessons, pupils listen to teachers' instructions well. However, the quality of work for some pupils does not always meet teachers' high expectations. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, which are reflected in their achievement in national examinations.

Pupils are positive about the school's broad range of extra-curricular activities. Examples of enrichment include British Sign Language, debating and sports clubs. Pupils are offered trips that include visits to Paris, Barcelona and Lourdes. Vulnerable pupils are supported by the school to access these opportunities.

Next steps

- Leaders should improve the consistency of teaching across subjects so that pupils learn equally well across the curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that improvements to the curriculum lead to positive trends in pupils' achievement.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values and protected characteristics.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Mr Steve Doherty.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior and curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative from the local authority.

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 Catholic religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2024.

The school makes use of 2 registered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Cafferkey

Lead inspector:
Usman Kothia, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Jane Holmes, Ofsted Inspector
Gil Bourgade, Ofsted Inspector
Paula Crawley, 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 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

783
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 1,067

School capacity

800
Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

28.86%
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

1.92%
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

14.30%
Close to 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 (revised)	37.6%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38.7%	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 (revised)	43.5	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41.5	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42.0	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)	-0.42	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.32	-0.03	Below

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)	24.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	7.1%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	17.5%	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)	37.9	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27.3	35.0	Below

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)	-1.03	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.37	-0.57	Below

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)	24.4%	53.1%	-28.7 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	7.1%	53.1%	-46.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.5%	52.4%	-34.9 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 (revised)	37.9	50.4	-12.5
2023/24 (final)	30.9	50.0	-19.1
2022/23 (final)	27.3	50.3	-23.0

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)	-1.03	0.16	-1.19
2022/23 (final)	-1.37	0.17	-1.54

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)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	90%	94%	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)	6.8%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	9.0%	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 (2 term)	17.8%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	23.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	27.2%	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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