

Mount Carmel Roman Catholic High School, Hyndburn

Address: Wordsworth Road, BB5 0LU

Unique reference number (URN): 119804

Inspection report: 25 November 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ **Safeguarding standards met**

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

How we evaluate safeguarding

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

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

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school's inclusive culture is a real strength. It is rooted in the sense of belonging that permeates the school and is particularly evident in the way that vulnerable pupils are supported.

Leaders have robust systems to swiftly and thoroughly identify any additional needs or barriers to learning that pupils may have. Staff receive a wealth of information about these pupils. Comprehensive training ensures that staff use this information to good effect to help pupils to achieve well and to get involved in the wider life of the school.

Leaders collaborate well with external agencies, for example to support pupils known to social care or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school also works closely with pupils' families. Staff develop highly positive relationships with pupils that help to inform the high-quality support that pupils receive.

Alternative provision is used appropriately. Leaders make suitable checks to ensure that the provision is safe and meets pupils' needs.

The school's pupil premium strategy is implemented well to help reduce any barriers to success that disadvantaged pupils might face. Leaders monitor the impact of this strategy carefully. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils in national examinations is testament to the effectiveness of the school's approach.

Personal development and well-being

Strong standard ●

Leaders have carefully crafted a programme of personal development that is woven through all aspects of school life. Being mindful of the school's context, they have placed a notable emphasis on providing enrichment opportunities that pupils might not ordinarily access. For example, pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about recent trips to museums and places of local historical interest, as well as the vast array of clubs that they attend. Leaders are committed to removing or reducing any barriers to participation so that all pupils benefit from the school's extensive offer. Leaders' rigorous monitoring of pupils' participation ensures that those who will benefit the most are included.

Pupils learn about a wide range of topics that help them to understand and navigate life in modern Britain, including how they can keep themselves safe from risk. For instance, pupils talk with maturity about healthy relationships and managing their mental health and wellbeing. They develop a sound grasp of the fundamental British values, including the importance of being respectful of difference. Pupils' understanding of such concepts is reflected in the respectful way that they behave towards each other.

Pupils value opportunities to contribute to the community, both within the school and beyond. As such, they relish the multitude of leadership roles on offer, including librarians, sports representatives, charity and wellbeing leaders. These roles help to develop pupils' understanding of behaving responsibly. Pupils perform these roles with pride.

The school provides a comprehensive careers programme that prioritises raising pupils' aspirations. Pupils are well informed about the opportunities that are available to them when they leave school. They particularly appreciate visits from former pupils who share their own experiences. The information and guidance that pupils receive, together with the school's personal development programme, help to instil pupils with the knowledge and experiences that they need to embrace their next steps with confidence.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Typically, pupils at this school achieve well. This is reflected in their results in national examinations, which have improved over time. The above-average progress that pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, make from their starting points is particularly noteworthy. This reflects the school's highly effective approach to ensuring that its most vulnerable pupils achieve well.

In many subjects, pupils' attainment in national assessments is also in line with national averages. This includes pupils' average attainment across the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

In the main, pupils across the school learn the curriculum well. In most subjects, they build deep bodies of knowledge that prepare them well for their next steps in education. Nevertheless, in a small number of subjects, pupils' learning is less secure. This is because, at times, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and addressed as promptly as they could be.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school has prioritised improving pupils' attendance and punctuality. For instance, leaders have increased capacity in the school's attendance team. This has enabled leaders to work more closely with the families of those pupils who miss school frequently. In addition, leaders have used their thorough understanding of the local community to introduce targeted additional support, such as health initiatives.

Leaders' work has made some positive gains. Overall, pupils' attendance is broadly in line with national averages. That said, leaders' oversight of the impact of their work to help pupils who are persistently absent is not as thorough as it could be. At times, this limits how effectively the school tackles the barriers to regular attendance for some pupils.

Pupils' highly positive attitudes towards school and their learning are evident in their adherence to the rules and routines that help the school day to run smoothly. It is the norm for pupils to do the right thing without being asked. They are respectful and respond quickly to prompts from staff, who uphold the school's expectations of behaviour consistently well.

Staff have created a safe haven for pupils, where they typically do not worry about bullying or discriminatory behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that subject curriculums are carefully designed. Consequently, teachers are clear about what pupils should know to be ready for their next stage of learning. Leaders' accurate understanding of curriculum quality enables them to tailor their actions appropriately to improve each subject.

Teachers use their subject knowledge well to explain difficult concepts to pupils. Teachers routinely use effective strategies to make learning accessible to all and are acutely aware of those pupils who require additional support. These pupils receive the help that they need to learn successfully.

Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding. In the main, these checks appropriately inform teachers' decisions about when to revisit learning and when to move on. However, in a few subjects, teaching does not check how well pupils are doing as closely as it could. This hinders teachers in identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' understanding.

The school knows which pupils have gaps in their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge. These pupils benefit from appropriate support from suitably trained staff. Leaders' work to support pupils still developing their reading skills has been particularly effective. These pupils learn to read fluently and confidently.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors make decisions with pupils' best interests front and centre. These decisions reflect leaders' unwavering commitment to raising the aspirations and improving the life opportunities of pupils.

Particularly careful attention is given to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils who face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. The support that these pupils receive, and the extent to which it enables them to thrive both academically and personally, is worthy of note.

Governors know the school well and undertake their statutory duties effectively. They share leaders' sound understanding of the school's strengths and of what could be improved further. Leaders have prioritised their actions for improvement sensibly and, in the main, these actions have been effective. For instance, the school's work to support pupils to read well has made a tangible difference. It has enabled those pupils to access the curriculum more successfully. However, in a couple of areas, most notably attendance, leaders' analysis of their actions is less thorough. This means that some improvements are not as rapid as they could be.

Staff and pupils alike feel that they are part of the Mount Carmel family. Staff appreciate the emphasis that leaders place on their wellbeing, including by ensuring that their workload is

manageable. A carefully considered, evidence-informed programme of professional learning has helped to develop the expertise of staff at all stages of their careers.

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

Pupils are welcomed as valued members of the Mount Carmel family from the moment they join this school. Consequently, they quickly develop a strong sense of belonging that is underpinned by highly positive relationships with staff and with each other. Staff know pupils well, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, staff quickly spot any pupils who might need reassurance or support.

Pupils' individuality is celebrated. This helps them to feel safe and to have the confidence to be themselves. Bullying is rare and, when it does occur, pupils rightly trust staff to resolve it quickly.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils' achievement, born out of their understanding that positive educational experiences can help to overcome social disadvantage. This ambition is evident in the very high proportion of pupils who take the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Pupils benefit from carefully designed subject curriculums that are typically taught well. Staff take a vigilant approach to identifying and reducing any barriers to learning that pupils may have. In the main, pupils achieve well. Many make remarkable progress from their starting points, particularly those pupils who are disadvantaged. This is reflected in national examination outcomes.

Photos of pupils joyfully participating in enrichment activities adorn the school corridors, celebrating the multitude of enrichment opportunities that leaders provide. Pupils are keen to nurture new talents or interests, from American football to performing in the school's annual production. They also embrace leadership roles that enable them to serve the school community. For example, prefects act as positive role models during social times. Most pupils benefit fully from all that the school has to offer because they enjoy learning, behave well and attend school regularly.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen their work to secure regular school attendance from those pupils who persistently miss out on their education.
 - Leaders should ensure that assessment strategies are closely aligned with the knowledge in the curriculum across all subjects, so that teachers consistently make astute decisions about what to teach and when to teach it.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Andrew Dabrowski.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Salford. She also spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.

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. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in March 2020.

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Xavier Bowers

Lead inspector:

Sally Rix, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Amanda Downing, His Majesty's Inspector

Amina Modan, His Majesty's Inspector

Ben Hill, His Majesty's Inspector

Jenny Jones, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

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



This data is from 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

795

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

810

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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

32.96%

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

2.89%

Close to 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

8.68%

Below 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	38.5%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24	34.6%	45.9%	Below
2022/23	34.7%	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	42.5	45.9	Close to average
2023/24	42.5	45.9	Close to average
2022/23	43.2	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	0.38	-0.03	Above
2022/23	-0.04	-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	22.0%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24	30.2%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23	22.4%	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	34.4	34.9	Close to average
2023/24	40.8	34.6	Above
2022/23	38.8	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	0.15	-0.57	Above
2022/23	-0.22	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	22.0%	52.8%	-30.9 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24	30.2%	53.1%	-22.9 pp
2022/23	22.4%	52.4%	-30.0 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	34.4	50.3	-15.9
2023/24	40.8	50.0	-9.2
2022/23	38.8	50.3	-11.5

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	0.15	0.16	-0.01
2022/23	-0.22	0.17	-0.38

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	94%	91%	Average
2022 leavers	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers	91%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	8.7%	7.7%	Close to average
2023/24	10.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23	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 (1 term)	23.2%	21.1%	Close to average
2023/24	30.1%	25.6%	Above
2022/23	30.4%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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