

Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School

Address: Victoria Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, West Midlands, B27 7XY

Unique reference number (URN): 146124

Inspection report: 12 May 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.

This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Expected standard

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that a well-planned, ambitious curriculum is in place for the sixth form, which meets students' needs and aspirations. Typically, teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. They explain new learning clearly and check students' understanding well, so gaps in learning or misconceptions can be addressed. They provide effective support to students who may face learning barriers. Students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress well through the curriculum. Their work shows a secure understanding of their learning. They achieve well from their starting points in public examinations in a wide range of subjects.

Students have many opportunities to develop their character and to contribute to the school. Many are proud to take on leadership opportunities such as wellbeing leaders, sports leaders and leading assemblies. Many also get involved in raising money for various charities. Students know to be respectful to others and say that everyone is accepted in the sixth-form. They appreciate the pastoral support provided by staff. They receive effective careers advice and guidance, enabling them to make well informed choices about their next steps. They are well-prepared for life beyond school.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Many pupils currently at the school are not developing the important knowledge they need in reading, writing and number facts. Some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not produce work that shows a secure understanding of the taught curriculum. Furthermore, some pupils struggle to write legibly and accurately. At times, pupils' responses show a lack of depth of understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not progressing as well as they could from their starting points.

Published outcomes in national examinations for pupils in key stage 4 show that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve in line with national averages across a range of subjects.

Students in the sixth form achieve well. Their work shows they have a secure understanding of the curriculum. This is reflected by their achievement in public examinations. They are

well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is typically taught well across all subjects and year groups. In some subjects and in the sixth form, teachers deliver the curriculum well. However, this is not the case in too many subjects. Teachers do not check pupils' understanding effectively. As a result, they do not routinely address gaps in pupils' learning and misconceptions. Frequently, teaching does not support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access the curriculum. The teaching that pupils with SEND receive in the learning resource centre is not effective or coherently planned. As a result, it does not meet their needs or address their barriers to learning effectively.

Teaching does not prioritise developing the essential knowledge that pupils need in reading, writing and mathematics. Too many pupils who need extra help to improve their reading are not getting any support. The support that other pupils receive is not always effective in improving their reading skills and knowledge.

Leaders have ensured that a well-sequenced, logically planned curriculum is in place for all subjects and key stages. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. In some subjects, and in the sixth form, the activities teachers use support pupils' learning effectively.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention 

Leaders have developed an appropriate programme for pupils' personal development. However, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not develop their understanding in sufficient depth of important topics such as fundamental British values and equality. Pupils can describe how to stay safe online. They learn about the risks they may face in the community. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through the relationships and sex education part of the programme. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. However, their understanding and recall of other elements of the programme is limited.

The personal development programme has a limited impact in helping pupils to learn right from wrong. The pastoral support pupils receive is sometimes ineffective in helping them become resilient. It does not support some pupils well in dealing with emotional issues. However, the support provided to pupils who have emotionally based school avoidance does help them to re-engage with school.

The school provides a range of extracurricular activities for pupils to take part in. Some pupils take part in activities such as chess club, football, cricket and dance. However, many pupils do not take part in these, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Some pupils are not aware of the clubs they can take part in. As a result, some pupils do not develop their talents and interests.

Sixth-form students have a more positive experience. They get effective pastoral support and are well prepared for their next steps. They are proud to take on leadership

responsibilities in school.

The school has ensured that the careers programme supports pupils to be well informed about their next steps in education, training or employment. For example, pupils have interviews with a careers adviser and trips to colleges and universities.

Urgent improvement ●

Attendance and behaviour

Urgent improvement ●

Leaders' actions to improve behaviour have not led to pupils generally behaving well. While lessons are generally calm, some pupils experience disruption to their learning. Most pupils move around the school appropriately. However, too many pupils do not behave well at unstructured times. In the corridors, a significant minority of pupils are boisterous. They push other pupils and play fight. This makes some pupils feel unsafe. Too many pupils truant from lessons and disrupt others' learning. Leaders have taken steps to address this. However, their actions have not been effective because they lack an accurate understanding of the issues. Pupils and staff report that behaviour has worsened over time. A significant number of staff do not feel well supported by leaders when behaviour issues arise. Pupils who experience repeated sanctions are not effectively supported to improve their behaviour. Some pupils have racist and sexist language directed at them by other pupils. They lack confidence in how the school deals with these issues. In lessons, too many pupils do not demonstrate positive attitudes and do not engage well with learning. Sixth-form students have much more positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils' attendance is starting to improve, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, leaders lack clarity around the causes of poor attendance. They are not clear about which of their actions are effective in improving attendance. Some actions are in their infancy. As a result, improvements in attendance are limited.

Inclusion

Urgent improvement ●

Leaders have not ensured that all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified and assessed. The information that teachers get about the needs of these pupils and the strategies to support them in accessing learning is improving. However, for too many pupils with SEND this is not the case. Support plans for some pupils are not detailed enough to help teachers address barriers to learning. Some pupils with SEND attend the learning resource centre for their lessons. However, the support they receive here is inconsistent and does not effectively support their learning.

In too many lessons, teaching is not adapted to support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. They find it hard to complete work, and as a result they do not learn as well as they should. In some lessons, additional adults supporting pupils with SEND are not used effectively.

The school is aware of the pupils who need extra support to develop their reading skills and knowledge. Some of these pupils get support, but it is not always sufficient to help them

improve their reading. Furthermore, a significant number of pupils are not receiving any support. This means they find it difficult to learn in too many lessons.

Typically, leaders use the extra funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils well to support their learning. Pupils who have emotional issues that affect their attendance are generally well supported. As a result, their attendance is improving. Leaders use alternative provision well and in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Urgent improvement ●

Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive an acceptable standard of education. They are aware of what needs to improve. However, their actions have not been effective in bringing about the necessary improvements. Leaders have not addressed some of the issues identified at the previous inspection. For example, pupils who need support with their reading still do not get the help that they need. Leaders have not addressed internal truancy. This is because they do not have an accurate understanding of the extent of the problem due to inaccurate recording of attendance. Leaders have not ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately and swiftly identified. Typically, pupils with SEND do not get the support they need.

Those responsible for governance have not been effective in holding leaders to account. They carry out their statutory duties well. However, they do not have an accurate understanding of the extent of problems in the school, as they are not always provided with the information they need. Trust leaders have been too slow to address problems. School and trust leaders, and those responsible for governance, do not have the capacity to bring about the required improvements.

Many staff do not feel the school is well led and managed. They have mixed views on how their workload and wellbeing are supported. Staff do not feel they are supported to manage behaviour effectively. While staff have professional learning opportunities to improve how they perform their roles, these have not been effective. The quality of teaching is variable as a result. Parents and carers have mixed views about the school. Some feel their children do well at this school. However, a significant number have concerns about the support for pupils with SEND and the poor behaviour in school.

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

Standards at this school have declined since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not well supported to access the curriculum. Their needs are not accurately identified or addressed. Too many pupils who need support with their reading do not get it.

Too many pupils truant from lessons. The school has not been effective in addressing this issue. Some pupils are boisterous and unruly at unstructured times. For example, some pupils push others and play fight as they move between lessons. This makes other pupils feel unsafe. The school has not ensured that there are clear routines that pupils understand and follow. Some pupils are disrespectful to others and to staff. At times, they use

discriminatory language. Often this goes unchallenged. Typically, pupils enjoy learning at school. However, they experience disruption to learning in some lessons. Typically, bullying is dealt with effectively. However, some pupils lack confidence in how the school handles these issues. Many pupils attend school well but some are absent frequently.

Pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not benefit from consistently effective teaching. This affects how well pupils learn in different subjects. Some pupils do not develop the essential knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. This hinders their learning and access to the wider curriculum. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as they could. Students in the sixth form have a better experience. They generally achieve well by the end of their studies. They are well prepared for their next steps.

Some pupils participate in the school's extra-curricular offer. This is particularly true for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, where many pupils in Year 9 complete the bronze award. However, participation in other aspects is limited. Pupils are not always aware of what clubs are on offer. This means opportunities to pursue interests and develop talents are limited.

Next steps

- Those responsible for governance need to ensure they have an accurate understanding of the quality of provision in the school so they can hold leaders to account.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance must identify priorities for improvement and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions accurately to ensure they are bringing about the improvements needed.
- Leaders need to ensure that they accurately and swiftly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and that teachers receive the information and training they need so that they are able to support these pupils well.
- Leaders must ensure they have effective systems in place to address internal truancy, thereby reducing the number of pupils who repeatedly miss lessons.
- Leaders need to ensure that there are high expectations for how pupils behave during unstructured times and in lessons, so that the school is calm and orderly.
- Leaders need to ensure they have a detailed understanding of the barriers some pupils face in attending school regularly, and effective strategies to overcome these, so that attendance improves for all pupils.
- Leaders must ensure that pupils at the early stages of reading receive effective support.
- Leaders must ensure that teachers effectively check pupils' understanding so they can address any gaps in learning or misconceptions.
- Leaders need to ensure that teachers support pupils to develop the essential knowledge they need in reading, writing and number so they can achieve well.
- Leaders need to ensure that the personal development programme supports all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, to develop a better understanding of the important knowledge in the

programme, including about fundamental British values and equality, so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

About this inspection

This school is part of St Teresa of Calcutta Multi-Academy Company (MAC), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Professor Paul Ryan, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Andrew Cullinane.

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, other senior leaders, trust leaders and those responsible for governance.

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.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

HMCI strongly recommends that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspections we carry out.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 4 registered alternative provisions.

The school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Birmingham. Its last section 48 inspection was November 2025.

Ciaran Clinton: Headteacher

Lead inspector:

Paul Halcro, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Lois Kelly, Ofsted Inspector

Dan Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Peter Bassett, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Grady, 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 12 May 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,158

Close to 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

1,190

Close to 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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

51.07%

Well 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

0.86%

Well 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

15.46%

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

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 (final)	33.5%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	30.4%	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 (final)	41.7	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.7	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.8	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)	-0.13	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.09	-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 (final)	20.6%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	16.7%	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 (final)	35.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.7	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35.9	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)	-0.32	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.32	-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 (final)	20.6%	53.1%	-32.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	25.3%	53.1%	-27.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	16.7%	52.4%	-35.8 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 (final)	35.1	50.4	-15.3
2023/24 (final)	38.7	50.0	-11.3
2022/23 (final)	35.9	50.3	-14.4

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)	-0.32	0.16	-0.49
2022/23 (final)	-0.32	0.17	-0.48

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 (revised)	85%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	89%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	90%	94%	Below

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 (final)	23.33	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.23	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.47	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 (final)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.2	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 (3 term)	11.3%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.3%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.2%	9.0%	Above

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 (3 term)	34.8%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.5%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	39.3%	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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



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