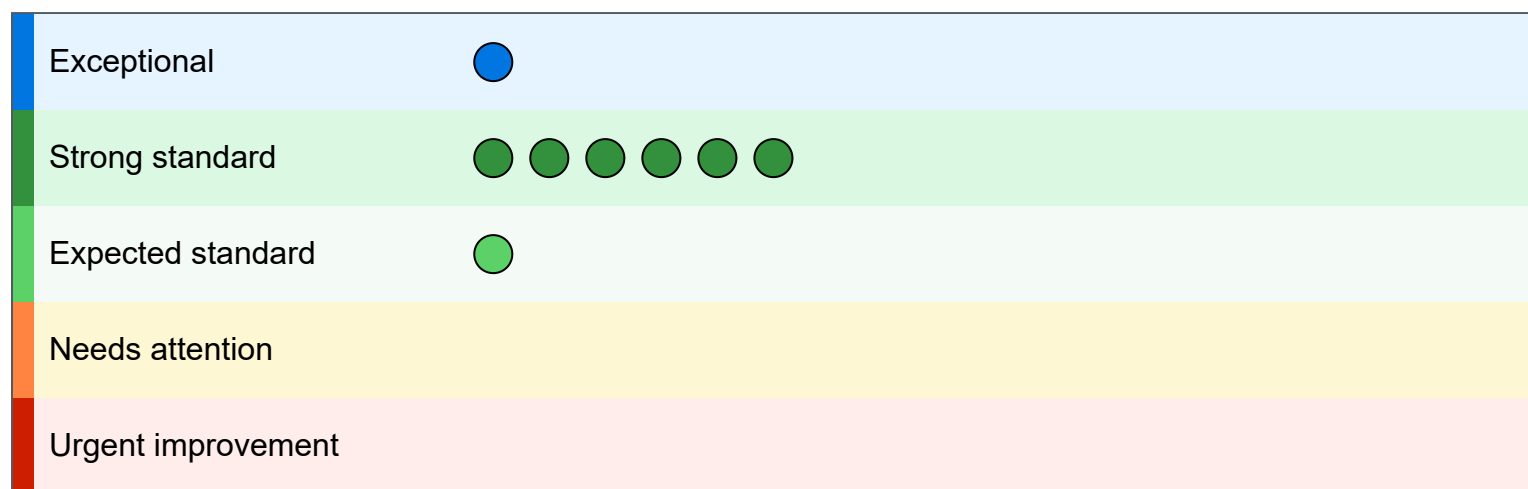


The Sydney Russell School

Address: Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 5QT

Unique reference number (URN): 141683

Inspection report: 12 May 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.

Exceptional ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Exceptional ●

Pupils access a comprehensive and deep set of personal development experiences. These have a profound, positive impact on many pupils, especially those experiencing disadvantage and those with barriers to their learning. Leaders curate these opportunities for pupils from the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 13.

The foundations of the curriculum are classes that fully prepare pupils, across all phases, for their future. These include life skills, financial literacy as well as meaningful encounters with the world of work. These classes develop pupils' understanding of their role in society deeply. For example, pupils in Year 8 have a nuanced understanding of the portrayal of stereotypes in the media and what this means for them in the community. Pupils' knowledge and learning are carefully assessed. Leaders use this information to continually refine the programme in order to meet pupils' changing needs.

Beyond this, leaders have planned a huge range of wider opportunities for pupils. Leaders take account of pupils' career aspirations and signpost pupils to enrichment opportunities that help pupils to achieve these aspirations. Leaders track all pupils' participation and ensure that everyone takes part. Attendance to these opportunities extends beyond participation. Pupils frequently develop real expertise in their area of interest, be it theatre production, professional sports, choral singing, robotics or rock climbing.

Alongside all this, leaders have refined a huge selection of student leadership opportunities for pupils. Many pupils stand for elected roles, mentor younger pupils or campaign for global changes at the 'democracy wall'. They do this with confidence, as a result of the school's leadership programme which develops pupils' skills in areas such as communication and oracy.

All pupils receive tailored careers advice and take part in meaningful work experience in Years 10 and 12. Targeted programmes ensure that all pupils find a place in education, employment or training when they leave school.

A culture of wellbeing fills the school, as a result of peer mentoring, wellbeing ambassadors, supportive staff and initiatives such as mental health week. This develops all pupils, including those experiencing disadvantage, to become confident and resilient.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve highly and make progress across the school from the beginning of the early years. Whatever their starting points, children in the early years are well prepared for learning in Year 1. In the primary phase, pupils achieve very highly in the phonics screening check in Year 1 and in the multiplication tables check in Year 4. By Year 6, pupils achieve significantly above the national average in English and mathematics national assessments.

In recent years, the proportion of pupils who achieved the highest standards in writing in Year 6 was below average. Leaders acted on this swiftly and have secured improvements in this area. These improvements are not reflected in the school's published results. In the secondary phase, pupils achieve highly and make excellent progress from their starting points across subjects at the end of Year 11.

Pupils produce high-quality work across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 use their previously-taught history knowledge of the Anglo-Saxons to write non-fiction in English. In drama in the secondary phase, pupils use physicality well to communicate ideas to an audience.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders closely analyse pupils' attendance. Robust systems identify trends and patterns in attendance rates across the school quickly. Leaders use this information to shape support for different groups of pupils who face barriers to regular attendance. This includes regular awards for positive attendance, school-level interventions and collaboration with external agencies where necessary. As a result, pupils attend school frequently and have done so for a sustained period. This includes students in the sixth form.

Leaders know and closely monitor pupils' behaviour patterns across both primary and secondary. Across classes, pupils behave extremely well. In the primary phase, pupils sustain concentration and follow well-embedded learning routines. In the secondary phase, learning proceeds in a calm, orderly environment where pupils are focused. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other. They support each other to share ideas, reflect and correct errors. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school culture in which they feel included and respected. They have positive professional relationships with staff who pupils describe as approachable and supportive. Suspensions, which have been very low for many years, are only ever used as a last resort. On the rare occasions that bullying takes place, the school deals with it quickly and effectively. Focused support for pupils who sometimes struggle to meet the school's high expectations of behaviour is particularly effective.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a highly accurate understanding of the strengths across the curriculum. The curriculum offer is very broad. Pupils choose to study from a wide range of subjects at GCSE and A level. Leaders continue to refine their curriculum thinking. For example, across the primary phase, leaders have researched and implemented a new writing curriculum that explicitly supports pupils to expand their vocabulary, write fluently and structure their imaginative ideas.

Across phases, teachers demonstrate subject expertise. They clearly explain their thinking and link new ideas to pupils' prior knowledge. This helps pupils to understand new knowledge securely. Teachers adapt resources and teaching consistently to meet pupils' needs and overcome barriers to their learning. They ensure that pupils know how to improve their work and deepen their understanding. This high-quality teaching extends to the sixth form, where teaching probes students' thinking and inspires thoughtful, academic discussion. Pupils in the primary phase benefit from subject-specific teachers and facilities from the secondary site in subjects including physical education.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are quickly identified and supported to catch up with their peers, if necessary. This support is available for pupils, whatever their stage or age.

Early years

Strong standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that prioritises children's communication skills and language development alongside all key areas for learning. Leaders carefully monitor children's progress and quickly identify any emerging learning needs that pupils may have. They use this information to identify gaps in pupils' learning and adapt teaching and resources where necessary. Staff take part in helpful professional learning so that they can deliver high-quality teaching that meets children's needs.

Staff model language and high expectations effectively for children. Children rehearse and extend their speaking through meaningful interactions with staff and collaborative learning with other children. Staff speak with pupils gently, and support them to learn to write with increasing accuracy.

Learning routines and behaviour expectations are very clear. Children readily follow these and embed positive learning quickly. They enjoy learning and exploring, inside and outside. Phonics teaching is precise. Teachers ensure that all children join in when learning new sounds and practise these until they are securely learned. Children develop a confident knowledge of numeracy, including new shapes, addition and subtraction. They also develop a love of reading. Children enthusiastically join in with stories together.

Staff work closely with families to support children's development. This work includes stay-and-play sessions, workshops and frequent home-school communication. Staff make effective arrangements to support children's academic, social and emotional readiness for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have a clear oversight of the school's work to overcome pupils' barriers to learning and/or wellbeing. Alongside this, well-trained experts provide precise support for pupils within specific phases and subjects. Support is continually responsive to pupils' emerging and changing needs. In the early years, accurate identification of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a particular focus.

Leaders provide detailed information on pupils' needs for teachers, who readily use this in classrooms. This includes support such as 'now and next' boards and teaching that helps pupils to master concepts before moving onto later learning. Pupils thrive during unstructured times, with support from staff who know them well. Where necessary, pupils receive additional support, such as coaching and counselling. This ensures that they are ready to learn.

Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND are very well supported through a range of adaptations. These support communication and enable pupils to learn the curriculum successfully.

Alternative provision is appropriately commissioned for the small proportion of pupils who need it. The school ensures that these pupils are placed in the right settings, attend well and continue to receive high-quality personal development.

Leaders target additional funding to support pupils experiencing disadvantage deliberately. This funding supports these pupils to achieve well academically and participate fully in the life of the school beyond the classroom.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement across the school. They carefully monitor all aspects of the school's work and continue to improve any areas that require refinement over time. Those responsible for governance know their statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding and equalities. They carry these out diligently. Those responsible for governance challenge and question leaders, with proportionate support from the trust.

Leaders provide an extensive professional learning programme for staff. It is informed by leaders' quality assurance processes, relevant research and feedback from staff. It enables staff to continually refine their practice and to develop their individual expertise. This means that staff are frequently well prepared to take on additional responsibilities within the school. Teachers at the beginning of their careers are fully supported to become effective practitioners.

Staff are very supportive of the senior leadership team, who they see as visible and responsive. Leaders take into account staff workload and wellbeing when making changes that may affect staff.

The school engages frequently with the local community and actively seeks out the views of parents and carers. Parents value the school's effective work to support their children within and beyond the curriculum.

Expected standard

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders offer an academic and aspirational curriculum for students. Leaders carefully monitor the quality of the teaching and ensure that students are prepared for academic success.

Teaching is well planned. Teachers regularly check that students understand advanced concepts and provide helpful feedback on what they need to do to improve. Students typically produce high-quality work across subjects. For example, they use sophisticated vocabulary when comparing texts in English literature and fluently discuss the complexities of presidential elections in government and politics. Staff also support students to develop their independence through the study support programmes. Over time, students typically achieve and make progress in line with others nationally. This includes students with special

educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to their learning. This, in part, is because some of the strengths in teaching are new. They have not been fully embedded over a sustained period.

Students are very well prepared for the next stages in their learning and life beyond school. They benefit from the same highly effective personal development opportunities as pupils in the rest of the school. Students find the future pathways programme very informative, as it teaches them in detail about different career pathways that they could take. Students also value the extensive enrichment activities in which they all take part. These include debating, student leadership, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the finance society.

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

Pupils enjoy learning and develop their interests and talents beyond the classroom. From the beginning of each school day, pupils keenly meet leaders' high expectations in all respects.

Pupils across all phases behave very well in class and around the school. In class, pupils work hard. In the early years, children interact kindly, follow teachers' instructions promptly and learn with excitement. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils. Students in the sixth form do so informally, and as academic mentors for pupils taking GCSEs.

Pupils achieve well across all phases of education. In the primary phase, and by the end of Year 11, pupils' achievement and attainment is particularly high and has been over time. At the end of all phases, pupils are fully prepared for the next stage in their education.

The highly structured personal development programme builds pupils' knowledge on topics including careers, financial education, world religions and more. All pupils benefit from this provision. They demonstrate an uncommonly deep understanding of the topics that they are taught.

Pupils experience opportunities that they would not otherwise have had the chance to. These spark new interests, which are then cultivated across the arts, sports, sciences and technology to the highest level. For example, girls in Year 10 build and drive racing cars. All pupils in Year 7 learn an orchestral instrument. Pupils across phases produce and present programmes on the school's in-house television station, take part in high-quality theatre productions, and record podcasts. Student leaders actively support the wellbeing of other pupils. This work, including highly impactful mentoring and peer mentoring, has a transformational impact on pupils, especially those with barriers to their learning, many of whom feel that their lives have been turned around.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed recent improvements to the teaching of students in post-16 provision to ensure that all students, including those with higher prior attainment, make

excellent progress and attain highly.

About this inspection

This school is part of the partnership learning trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Roger Leighton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Saadat Mubashar.

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 HMI.

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.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, CEO, chair of the local governing body, senior leaders and staff across the school.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The specially resourced provision caters for 8 pupils with autism who have an education, health and care plan. Some of these pupils receive education across the provision and in mainstream classes.

The school currently makes use of 4 registered alternative provisions.

The school operates across 2 sites; a short walk apart. Pupils in the secondary and post-16 phases are taught at Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 5QT. Pupils in the primary phase, including the early years, are taught on the site at Fanshawe Crescent, RM9 5QA.

Principal: Clare Cross

Lead inspector:

Guy Forbat, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

David Lloyd, Ofsted Inspector

Shaun Dodds, Ofsted Inspector


Sahreen Siddiqui, Ofsted Inspector

Joseph Sparks, His Majesty's Inspector

Lauren Roberts, 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

2,640

Well 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

2,670

Well 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: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

29.28%

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

2.65%

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

10.98%

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)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Key stage 2

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	83%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	70%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	69%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	87%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	92%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	78%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	92%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	91%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	92%	73%	Above

Key stage 4

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)	52.5%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58.0%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	55.3%	45.3%	Above

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)	51.2	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	53.4	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	51.5	46.3	Above

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)	0.72	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.38	-0.03	Above

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.

Key stage 2

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	71%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	32%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	58%	44%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	80%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	79%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	32%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	83%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	92%	59%	Above

Key stage 4

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)	36.7%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	40.0%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	43.3%	25.2%	Above

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)	44.3	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	46.5	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	46.8	35.0	Above

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)	0.41	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.02	-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 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	68%	-11 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	69%	2 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	67%	-36 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	66%	-8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	80%	80%	1 pp
2024/25 (final)	79%	81%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	79%	80%	-1 pp
2022/23 (final)	83%	78%	5 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	59%	78%	-19 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	78%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	78%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	83%	80%	3 pp
2024/25 (final)	82%	81%	2 pp
2023/24 (final)	74%	79%	-6 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	92%	79%	12 pp

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)	36.7%	53.1%	-16.4 pp
2023/24 (final)	40.0%	53.1%	-13.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	43.3%	52.4%	-9.1 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)	44.3	50.4	-6.1
2023/24 (final)	46.5	50.0	-3.5
2022/23 (final)	46.8	50.3	-3.5

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 (final)	0.41	0.16	0.24
2022/23 (final)	0.02	0.17	-0.15

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)	94%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	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 (final)	37.29	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.71	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38.28	34.16	Above

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)	0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to 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 (3 term)	5.4%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.0%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	9.0%	Below

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)	11.6%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	11.9%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.8%	26.5%	Below

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

W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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