

Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119799 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 379893 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 March 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Ruth James HMI |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 803 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Philip Waters |
| Headteacher | Philip Mooney |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 May 2007 |
| School address | Melbourne Avenue Fleetwood FY7 8AY |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ruth James
Anne Thomas
Robert Birtwell
Peter Mather

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Forty-four lessons were observed and the same number of teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, two members of the governing body, and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to aspects of the school's work including safeguarding, behaviour, and students' progress. An analysis of 470 questionnaires from parents or carers was considered along with questionnaires from students and staff.

Information about the school

Cardinal Allen is a smaller than average secondary school. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Very few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost all students have English as their first language. The overall proportion of disabled students or with special educational needs is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school met the current government floor standard in 2011.

The school is a specialist school for mathematics and computing. It has many awards including the BECTA ICT award, Green Flag status and the Design award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Overall Effectiveness | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- The school provides a good education within a caring and supportive environment. The promotion of students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The vast majority of students, parents and carers are very positive about most aspects of provision. Behaviour and teaching are good, with the result that students achieve well and make good progress. Disabled students and those with special educational needs also achieve well because of the good teaching and specialist support they receive.
- Achievement in mathematics is a particular strength. Most groups of students achieve well across a range of subjects but there remain a few subjects where students do not achieve as well. Strategies are in place to address this and there is clear evidence of improvement.
- The best teaching is closely tailored to the students’ needs and abilities and is underpinned by the teachers’ good subject knowledge and high expectations. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and students and interesting learning activities. However, while a large majority of teaching is good, there are few outstanding lessons. In a minority of lessons, there are limited opportunities for independent working, reflection or consolidation of learning.
- Students are polite, and respectful towards adults and each other. Their good attitudes ensure that they benefit from the good teaching they receive. They feel safe and report that bullying is rare. Attendance is high, as a result of the concerted efforts of school staff and the engaging curriculum.
- The headteacher provides firm and authoritative leadership. Together with a capable senior team he has led the school on an improving journey. Middle leaders also contribute well, but outcomes are not consistently good in all subjects. Members of the governing body bring a range of expertise to their strategic work and provide an appropriate level of challenge.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further, especially in areas with weaker outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching further to ensure that all lessons are at least good and increase the proportion of outstanding lessons by:
 - ensuring there is a suitable balance between teacher exposition and student centred activities that promote independent learning
 - providing plenty of opportunities for discussion and collaborative work
 - ensuring that reinforcement and consolidation of learning is effective, for example, through use of plenaries
 - improving the consistency of marking so that students receive clear guidance on how to improve in all subjects.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. It is particularly strong in mathematics. Attainment in a few subjects such as English has not been as good but this has been recognised. The school's increasingly focused efforts to improve literacy skills, and specific strategies to improve examination results in English are raising attainment, as is evidenced by very recent examination results for the current Year 11. Students make good progress in most lessons. Students acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise skills well. They are keen to learn and collaborate productively with their peers. They are keen to do well, apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. When given opportunities to develop their skills of independent working, or challenged to deepen their responses to teachers' good questioning, they often make quick progress. The achievement of almost all groups of students is good, but students known to be eligible for free school meals do not achieve as well as others. This picture of good progress is in agreement with the very high level of satisfaction about progress expressed by parents and carers. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported in mainstream lessons and through specialist teaching which ensures they also achieve well.

Quality of teaching

Inspection evidence confirmed the views of parents and carers about the good quality of teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are well planned and structured. Positive relationships help to ensure that students develop confidence and ask for help when needed. They engage well with the tasks and activities they are set. In discussion they readily offer their opinions and explain them. In most lessons there is a good level of challenge and learning proceeds at a good pace. Teachers take care to promote the use of subject specific vocabulary. Questioning is effective. For example, in mathematics in a lesson on simultaneous equations, the teacher made good use of open questions to deepen understanding, giving students time to think and eliciting possible strategies for solving more complex problems. Modern foreign language lessons make effective use of the target language. Strategies to involve students in assessment and evaluation of their own work are developing. For example, in a geography lesson about earthquakes students assessed each

other's work against specific level criteria. The teacher used examples from students' work to enhance understanding further.

Occasional weaknesses in teaching which prevent it from being outstanding include missed opportunities to consolidate and reinforce learning, a lack of discussion and collaborative work, and some teacher led lessons which do not encourage independence. Marking is not consistent across all subjects. Good examples of marking with guidance for improvement were seen but some marking is perfunctory. Teaching is highly effective at promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a personal and social education lesson, students were encouraged to think about poverty, human rights and aid. In discussion, the teacher encouraged students to reflect carefully when they considered how individuals should be treated if they were responsible for mistreating others.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour, both in school and over time, is good. Students are calm and orderly when moving around the school. They behave sensibly and with consideration and respect in the dining room and in the school grounds. Students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance. Attitudes to learning are positive and contribute well to achievement. Students engage well in lessons and they are diligent and conscientious in their approach to the tasks and activities set. They listen carefully, respond readily to questions and instructions, and tackle work set diligently and conscientiously. They cooperate well in group activities. However, they sometimes lack a degree of independence and depend on their teachers for direction. School systems for managing behaviour and discipline are secure. The school's policies and strategies for dealing with any unacceptable behaviour are well understood with clear rewards and sanctions. Students' understanding of right and wrong is strong and almost all students are highly adept at managing their own behaviour. As well as internal provision such as the behaviour support room, there are well established links with outside agencies to help support the very small minority of students who struggle to manage their own behaviour well. Bullying of all types is rare. Students show total confidence that any such problems would be reported to staff, and feel that the response is effective. Students regard behaviour as good. They have a good understanding of safety issues, including e-safety, and what constitutes unsafe situations. Almost all parents feel students are safe at school and the very large majority say behaviour is good. Although not seen during the inspection, a few parents and carers and students commented that lessons were occasionally disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and his senior team have steered the school on a steadily improving journey over recent years with determination and skill. They focus consistently on securing good levels of achievement. The quality of leadership is a key factor in the increasing proportion of good teaching and rising attainment. The vision of the headteacher is clear and ambitious. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and based on a very thorough analysis of the school's work. There is a strong sense of corporate responsibility throughout all levels of leadership. Middle leaders feel strongly held to account. Continuing professional development is well targeted and effective. This commonality of purpose and the very good systems, such as targeted subject audits and associated action plans, give the school a secure capacity to continue to improve. Recent initiatives such as the 'Pick up a book' scheme to encourage reading, and the decision to appoint a literacy coordinator to promote

literacy across the curriculum are designed to further strengthen existing strategies to improve students' literacy skills.

Members of the governing body show a high level of commitment to supporting the work of the headteacher and senior staff and also offer appropriate challenge, based on a very good knowledge of the school. Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements. The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for students with different aptitudes and abilities. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is fostered very strongly in lessons and by opportunities throughout the wider curriculum. The school's established assessment and tracking systems are increasingly being used to monitor the progress of different groups of students. Equality is promoted well and discrimination tackled effectively. Specific systems for monitoring the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs are meticulous and extremely thorough. Engagement with parents and carers is effective and links with other agencies and institutions help to enhance the curriculum offer and to ensure that all students are well supported.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

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|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 March 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood, Fleetwood
FY7 8AY**

Thank you for the welcome you showed the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, and seeing you work in lessons. We also valued the various conversations we had with many of you, and the feedback on the questionnaires which many of you completed.

We have found that Cardinal Allen is a good school that is well led and continuously improving. The promotion of your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is especially strong. Teaching is good and your teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons and activities for you. We were pleased to see that you behave well and are polite and respectful. You told us that you feel safe at school and that bullying is rare and most of you felt that when it did happen, it was dealt with well. Your achievement is good, and your examination results at the end of Year 11 are well above those gained by other students nationally in many subjects. You do especially well in mathematics.

Your headteacher leads the school very effectively, along with senior and middle leaders. We have asked them to continue their good work and to improve teaching further so that even more is good or outstanding, and marking is clear about how you can improve. This should ensure that you get even better results.

We are confident that you will continue to play your part by working hard and doing your very best. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth James
Her Majesty's Inspector

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