

# Cardinal Newman Catholic School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109699
<b>Local Authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	356607
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Walker

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1403
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Crow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Warden Hill Road Luton LU2 7AE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 52 lessons and observed 41 teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school development plan, the tracking system to monitor the students' progress, safeguarding documentation, and the work students completed in their books. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires completed by staff, a sample of students, and 508 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by different groups of students in subjects across the curriculum.
- The effectiveness of teaching in engaging students so that they make at least good progress in lessons.
- The quality of provision in the sixth form and whether this meets the needs of the students.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in supporting improvements in the school.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than the average comprehensive school and is located on the northern outskirts of Luton. It serves students from a very large geographical area, which includes surrounding villages. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds, with 40% from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, including Asian, Black African, East European and White Irish heritage. The percentage of students who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. The proportion of students with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average.

The school was part of the Building Schools for the Future programme. Proposals for a new building due to start in September 2010 are currently under review. The school has an expanding sixth form and takes additional students from a number of schools in the town. It gained specialist status in science in 2004. It participates in a sports partnership with other local schools. The school has received the Investors in People and Quality Mark awards and holds National Healthy Schools status.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has many outstanding features. Its very positive ethos greatly assists the academic and personal development of every student. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is fully inclusive in integrating students from different ethnic and social backgrounds and all have full and equal access to the learning opportunities available. The headteacher provides very effective leadership so that there is a shared vision for continuous improvement in the school. The very large majority of parents and carers speak very highly of the school and the support for their children.

Students make good progress, given their broadly average starting points, and leave with above-average attainment. In 2010, GCSE results were above average. Attainment in business studies, religious studies, physical education and health and social care is well-above average and indicates very good progress. Attainment in English and mathematics is improving and is, currently, above average. However, attainment in a number of GCSE subjects is average and, in a few cases, below average, and progress in these subjects is not as rapid as in others. Heads of department in these subjects are not fully effective in monitoring students' progress or the effectiveness of subject colleagues so as to give support and share good practice in teaching and learning. Students in the sixth form make good progress and most progress to higher education.

The tracking system for progress identifies underachieving students, who then receive appropriate support through a range of intervention strategies. The assessment information on students' attainment and progress shows that they are set challenging targets in all years and the majority are making at least good progress in their work. However, not all teachers are fully using assessment information to inform planning and learning. The assertive mentoring programme is greatly supporting the good progress as all students have personal mentors who oversee their academic development. The school is particularly successful in raising the achievement of boys in English and mathematics by modifying the teaching and providing additional classes and intervention support.

Curricular provision is good and reflects the positive impact of the science specialist status. The good range of academic and vocational options in Years 10 and 11 has increased students' motivation and engagement. The large majority of teaching in the school is securing good progress and learning. It is effective in ensuring that students are motivated and actively engaged in lessons. In a minority of lessons, teaching is less effective and does not encourage the students to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers do not always fully check students' understanding or provide sufficient guidance on improvement.

The high quality of care, guidance and support is greatly supporting the good personal development of the students. There are excellent systems of pastoral care which ensure

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that students are treated as important individuals within this large school. Students feel very safe in the school and have an excellent understanding of issues relating to safety. The behaviour of the large majority of students is good and this supports a positive atmosphere in the school. They make an excellent contribution to the school and local community by volunteering to take responsibility in school, raising considerable amounts of money for charities and taking a full part in activities within the local community.

The headteacher and senior leadership team are well aware of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Strategic planning is good and there are clear actions for improvement based on the school's accurate self-evaluation. The governing body's effectiveness is outstanding. It is fully involved in monitoring and strategic planning. It proactively challenges the school and holds it to account. The school has excellent partnerships with community groups, external services and local schools. It also makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion. There are very positive relationships with parents and carers who strongly engage with their children's learning and the work of the school. The clear vision of the headteacher and senior leadership team, the commitment of staff to the school, the effective systems of tracking students' progress and students' good progress and improved attainment indicate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that all teaching and learning is at least good by making sure that all teachers:
  - use assessment information more consistently to inform planning and learning
  - check students' understanding in lessons and provide feedback through regular marking of work which shows the next steps in learning
  - encourage students to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Develop greater effectiveness and consistency in the practice of subject leaders so that they can fully support improvements in the school by ensuring that they:
  - regularly monitor students' progress and the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas
  - share the best practice in teaching and learning in order to bring about improvement.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Evidence from students' work seen during the inspection demonstrates that the majority of classes are making at least good progress during the current year. The sense of purpose in most lessons is very positive and the students want to do well. Most students enjoy learning and make good progress. For example, Year 10 students were fully engaged in their English lesson and made good progress when discussing and developing their understanding of how to use argument and persuasion in their essay writing. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants in lessons and all gain GCSE qualifications because their progress is good. The school is successful in supporting Asian, Black African and East European students who speak English as an additional language to develop their language skills. Consequently, all

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can access the full range of the curriculum. Students from all minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress in line with others, particularly as they gain confidence in their language skills.

Students are very proud to be part of the school and they develop into friendly and confident young people. Attendance is above average and reflects the students' engagement with school. Most students have a good understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles as acknowledged by the Healthy Schools status. Most students take part in a wide range of sporting activities, even though participation is difficult for students who travel to school by bus. Students enjoy a range of opportunities to take responsibility, such as acting as representatives on the school council, mentoring younger students and supporting sport activities in the partner primary schools. Students show respect and empathy towards each other as well as demonstrating an excellent appreciation of the multicultural diversity of our society. Students develop a good level of understanding of what they have to do to succeed in their future education and careers.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

The large majority of teaching is good. Most teachers plan lessons in detail so that they are well prepared for their students. Students' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to effective learning. In most lessons, teachers plan a range of interesting activities and have high expectations of the students. As a result, students display

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enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration. Teachers are, in the main, using the assessment information on progress well to inform their planning of lessons so that the activities meet the different learning needs of all students. In a few lessons, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to adapt work to meet all learners' needs. Outstanding learning often takes place because teachers challenge students to think independently. Many teachers are effective in developing students' thinking skills and engaging them fully in discussion. However, not all teachers are fully encouraging students to take more responsibility for their own learning. A few teachers talk too much in lessons and do too much for the students. Teachers do not always check understanding during lessons or provide feedback through regular marking to show students how to improve.

The curriculum provides the students with a good range of learning opportunities. The revised school day provides longer periods for the development of independent-learning skills. The new thinking-skills programme in Key Stage 3 is supporting students' development of study skills. The more flexible timetabling in Year 11 gives additional support in English and mathematics to students who are at risk of not achieving their target grades. The expanding range of applied courses in Years 10 and 11 encourages many students to pursue vocational interests and work towards qualifications. Programmes in religious education, citizenship and personal, health and social education greatly support students' personal development. The comprehensive programme of physical education is supported effectively through the Schools Sports Partnership. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits provides good opportunities to enhance students' enjoyment and experience of school.

There are extremely effective systems of individual support for all students, including those who are potentially vulnerable or have difficulties with learning. The well-targeted support for individuals through the form tutor and personal mentor ensures positive attitudes to school and good progress in school work. The chaplaincy team makes a strong contribution to the welfare of students. There are rigorous procedures for monitoring students' attendance and following up absences. Excellent working relationships between the school and external agencies particularly benefit students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring their social and learning needs are met through effective programmes. The 'academic remove' is used well to support a small number of challenging students so that they are quickly reintegrated into mainstream lessons. There is an outstanding programme of careers education across the school which helps students make confident and well-informed choices about their future.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

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## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides clear and collaborative leadership so that staff work as a good team on the improvements in the school. She is well supported by a strong senior leadership team which is acting as a catalyst for change across the school. The school development plan is a comprehensive working document with a clear vision for improvement. There are well-developed systems for monitoring teaching and learning and, consequently, teaching is good and students make good progress. However, not every subject area is equally effective.

Robust procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach. Consequently, students feel very safe in school and most parents and carers report that their children feel safe in school. The governing body regularly checks that all practices and procedures fully meet health and safety requirements. There is regular communication with parents and carers regarding events in the school and the progress of their children. They are fully consulted regarding any changes, such as the proposed building. Strong links with Luton Futures Partnership and Campus Luton provide collaboration on curriculum provision and shared opportunities for professional development. The St Albans Deanery of Catholic Schools ensures exceptionally smooth transition arrangements from the partner primary schools and the exchange of good practice.

There is the strongest commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities for all, which ensures that the school is fully inclusive in integrating students from different ethnic and social backgrounds. The school's close analysis of performance ensures that individuals and groups achieve equally well. The school works very closely with the families from minority ethnic communities to welcome them into the community of the school and the church. The school organises student conferences as part of Luton in Harmony, which greatly support multicultural understanding in the town. The partnerships with schools in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Tanzania provide excellent opportunities for students to develop their understanding of the global community.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

Students from all social and ethnic backgrounds enter the sixth form and make good progress. They attain results which enable them to continue successfully to higher education, training or employment. Most Year 13 students progressed to higher education in 2010. AS- and A-level examination results have improved significantly over the last two years for students in both years. Improved guidance on course selection has led to almost all students completing their courses. Students enjoy their time in the sixth form and fully participate in the vibrant and positive community. They have mature attitudes to learning, attend regularly and make a considerable contribution to the main school. All students take part in community service within the local community. Many sixth form students take a full part in extra-curricular activities including sport, drama and music. Teaching is generally good, although it does not always provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning. The sixth form curriculum provides a good range of subject choices at both AS and A level. Each student is supported exceptionally well by a personal tutor. Students greatly appreciate the excellent support that they receive when they plan their futures. Outstanding leadership and management ensure that all students benefit greatly from their time in the sixth form. There have been significant improvements in the pass and retention rates in the sixth form since the last inspection, principally due to the excellent systems of support for the individual students initiated by leaders and implemented by managers.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

## Views of parents and carers

A larger-than-average percentage of parents and carers returned questionnaires than in most secondary schools. Most of these are very positive about the work of the school and its impact on their children's learning. Responses to the questionnaire included a number of detailed comments emphasising the very good leadership of the headteacher and the caring approach of staff towards their children. A very small minority of respondents suggested the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found clear evidence that the school deals effectively with the very few students who display challenging behaviour. A few respondents suggested the school does not take into account suggestions and concerns from parents and carers. Inspectors found that there is a regular parents' and carers' 'Forum' which encourages all to raise concerns and suggest ways to improve the school further. A very small minority of respondents also suggested the school does not help their children to have healthy lifestyles. Inspectors found that the school does have a comprehensive programme of health education in the physical education and personal, health and social education lessons. Overall, the vast majority of parents' and carers' views reflect inspection findings.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cardinal Newman Catholic School A Specialist Science College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 508 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1403 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	167	33	308	61	25	5	2	0
The school keeps my child safe	196	39	288	57	20	4	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	223	44	258	51	22	4	2	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	192	38	286	56	21	4	2	0
The teaching is good at this school	154	30	323	64	24	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	151	30	307	60	44	9	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	88	17	339	67	57	11	9	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	179	35	279	55	23	5	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	152	30	314	62	34	7	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	170	33	278	55	47	9	6	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	112	22	300	59	46	9	12	2
The school is led and managed effectively	168	33	307	60	19	4	2	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	214	42	272	54	18	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



24 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Luton, LU2 7AE**

Thank you for making us so welcome and for talking freely to us during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was helpful for us to see you during the assemblies, breaks and lunchtimes. Cardinal Newman Catholic School is good. It has many outstanding features. Your parents and carers are right to be pleased with the quality of education you receive.

The school's very positive ethos and your own good personal development are strong features. You are developing into friendly and confident young people and you are a credit to your school. Your headteacher is leading the school very effectively during an important period of development. You are very supportive in welcoming and supporting newcomers from different countries and backgrounds. It is good to see how you respect each other and demonstrate excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. You are enjoying the opportunities for responsibility in the school and all of you collect large amounts of money for charity. We saw how helpful your personal mentor is in helping you make good progress in your work. As a result, more of you are taking advantage of sixth form education and gaining further qualifications.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and the governing body to do the following things to make your school even better.

Ensure that your teachers check your understanding during lessons and use regular marking to show you clearly how to improve your work.

Encourage you to take more responsibility for your learning so that you are less reliant on the teacher.

Make sure that heads of department are consistently checking your progress and the quality of learning in lessons.

We would like to wish you success in your future education. Keep working hard and enjoying the many good things in your school.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector

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