

Newman Catholic College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101564
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	376592
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Raeside HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	517
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Teresa Outred
Principal	Mr Richard Kolka
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 May 2009
School address	Harlesden Road London NW10 3RN
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 39 lessons taught by 34 teachers, six of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors observed the college's work and looked closely at its analysis of students' progress and attainment. Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, community partners and local authority officers. Inspectors also scrutinised the college development plan, policies, reports from the School Improvement Partner and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires from 70 parents and carers, 99 students and 17 staff.

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

- The effectiveness and sustainability of strategies to raise attainment and improve rates of progress for all students and the capacity to sustain an upward trend of improvement.
- The effectiveness of strategies to secure high attendance across all groups of students.
- The quality of teaching and how well staff use assessment information to ensure that lessons meet the needs of all students.
- The quality and reliability of the college's self-evaluation and the capacity of leaders at all levels to drive improvement in provision and outcomes.

Information about the school

Newman Catholic College is a smaller than average boys' school. The great majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and over half speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average; a slightly lower than average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. There is a much higher than usual turnover of students joining and leaving the college throughout the school year. The college holds specialist status in mathematics and computing and the Investor in People 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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The renewed and revitalised Newman Catholic College is growing in numbers and in strength. It provides a good quality of education. The boys who belong to this close community appreciate the good teaching and excellent guidance they receive and take pride in their work. Groups of students from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together harmoniously within the exceptionally caring Catholic ethos. The social, moral, cultural and spiritual aspects of learning are very well developed, and underpinned by the values of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School initiative. The principal and senior leaders have effectively communicated the college's aim to become an institution in which 'everyone counts, everyone contributes, everyone succeeds'. These principles permeate students' attitudes to learning.

The college achieves this cohesion within a highly mobile local community. When boys enter the college, whether at the conventional times or not, they are quickly assessed and supported in their learning. This includes the high proportion who speak English as an additional language. Many arrive with no previous qualifications or with very low prior attainment in the core areas of English and mathematics. Attainment by the end of Year 11 remains low overall, but it is improving strongly because progress is good overall, and exceptional for some students.

The well-designed curriculum and judicious use of partnerships extend and enliven the learning experience. Boys' achievement is improving because they are carefully guided onto appropriate pathways. They benefit from a wide range of intervention and support, such as Saturday English classes for those still developing their use of language. Systems of assessment have been improved and refined since the last inspection. Students know their levels, grades and targets and are generally able to explain how to improve their work.

The sixth form, still within the early stages of its development, is growing and becoming an established feature of the college. Boys who stay on to study sixth form courses also benefit from outstanding care and support. Some have tried courses elsewhere but returned because they felt they were 'just a number' and because they missed the Newman ethos. The outstanding contribution to the college and wider community made by sixth form students is exemplified by the boys who won a prestigious award for community service then chose to spend their prize money on a cultural visit for the whole group.

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Teaching is good overall, and some is outstanding. In the best lessons, the college's wealth of assessment information is used to plan lessons and refine tasks so that they are sharply focused on the learning needs of groups and individuals. However, this aspect of good teaching is inconsistent. Lessons which are no more than satisfactory are often so because planning lacks precision. Learning intentions are not well communicated to the students and the lesson, as a result, lacks pace and challenge. Although targeted and focused questioning is promoting excellent progress in some lessons, it is not sufficiently widespread. Ambitious and appropriate plans and training opportunities are in place to secure a greater proportion of good and outstanding teaching. The impact of these can be seen in the most successful lessons, but the effectiveness of middle leaders in securing teaching that is consistently at least good is variable.

Overall improvements are the result of concerted and determined efforts to establish the college under its new name and within a new era of success. Governors and senior leaders have a clear understanding of the college's strengths and how they wish it to develop further. As a result, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching in order to drive up attainment and secure excellent progress in every lesson, by
 - ensuring that teachers focus their lesson planning sharply on learning intentions and tailor activities to meet the needs of all students
 - making the use of sharply focused, challenging and developmental questioning a feature of all lessons
 - raising the level of challenge and pace in every lesson to match that of the best
 - ensuring that strengths in the use of assessment to check and promote progress become a consistent feature of all lessons.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of professional development so that best practice becomes consistent practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students enjoy school, show positive attitudes to learning and talk enthusiastically about their work. They are keen to do well and enjoy keeping track of how they are performing against their targets. In class, they show concentration and respond to good teaching with thoughtful and enthusiastic responses. These highly positive attitudes to learning support good achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Since the last inspection, there has been a sharp rise in the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grades at grade C or higher, bringing this measure closer to the national average. Boys who spend

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their entire secondary education at Newman make at least good progress overall, with sustained high levels of progress over time in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Potentially vulnerable groups, such as those eligible for free school meals or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, often exceed expectations. Others who arrive at different points during their school career also achieve well; for some who are also acquiring English as an additional language, progress is rapid.

Students behave well and show respect for adults and for one another. They feel extremely safe at college. They say that they know whom to go to with any concerns and are confident that these will be addressed effectively. Student leaders adopt roles that support good behaviour; some are members of the anti-bullying council. Parents and carers agree that the college keeps students safe and that behaviour is well managed. Throughout the inspection, the boys reinforced this view with their polite, courteous and welcoming attitudes.

Pride in the college community is strongly in evidence. Students enjoy getting involved in college developments, contributing, for example, to new uniform designs and environmental improvements. The active school council is involved in evaluating learning, conducting observation walks with senior staff and responding to surveys about preferred learning styles. Student leaders patrol breaktimes, ensuring safe use of the all-weather pitch. Sixth formers provide reading support to younger boys. Students collaborate effectively and use information and communication technology with confidence. They know what they have to do to succeed and value the advice and support that they receive for each new step in their education. Attendance is average overall and improving. Almost every boy leaving Newman successfully continues on to further education, work or training.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will	2

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

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contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, the excellent relationships between students and staff are the foundation for sustained challenge and high expectations. No time is wasted. 'Hands up' is not allowed, because every boy knows that he may be expected at any moment to answer a question. Teachers are explicit from the outset about what knowledge or skills will be established or consolidated; students are able to explain clearly what and how they have learned. Assessment informs the planning of suitable tasks, but is also an integral feature of the learning. In an English lesson, boys showed insight in explaining the moral questions at the heart of Shakespeare's Macbeth. By the end, they could also reflect on their own responses in the light of examination criteria and assess how well they had done. Where lessons are only satisfactory, the pace of learning is slower. Good relationships still prevail, but there is insufficient challenge and boys are given too much time to complete tasks. The finely targeted continuous assessment methods that drive learning in the best lessons are not in evidence.

The curriculum is carefully tailored and adapted to maximise every student's chance of success. A wide range of qualifications ensures that different levels of ability are catered for. Students value the opportunity to take examinations in their heritage languages and this provides a rich seam of additional success. The specialism underpins the curriculum, for example through the early start to GCSE courses for more-able boys in science and mathematics, or the science and engineering projects run in conjunction with the local Education Business Partnership. Curriculum extension and enhancement are imaginative and build on excellent partnership work, such as the Kickz initiative, run by a premier league football club and designed to engage young people through sport. The 'into university' initiative has increased numbers staying on to pursue sixth form courses and the 'all star' programme targets the most able to help them achieve top grades.

The broad and balanced curriculum, carefully guided choices and exceptional focus on individual care all combine to support good achievement for all. The Damascus centre, for example, focuses effectively on turning back those who have embarked on a path of poor behaviour. There are striking examples of students whose personal circumstances have become very challenging, but who, through college support, have remained focused on their education and gone on to thrive as individuals.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior team is evolving and strengthening to meet the demands of each new phase of the college’s development. Highly effective partnerships play a part: recruitment through the Future Leaders programme is enabling continuity of expertise during changes in personnel. A higher education partnership provides critical support and challenge, and leadership consultancy from a prestigious sixth form college has helped to develop a more robust governing body.

College evaluation is thorough and senior leaders accurately judged progress in lessons alongside inspectors. The implementation of an innovative programme of professional development towards outstanding teaching and learning is underway, although its impact is yet to be fully realised.

The governing body is fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the college. Governors ensure the safety of students and staff through the rigorous application of effective child protection and safeguarding policies. They support college leaders in actively seeking ways to improve their engagement with all groups of parents and carers. Parents and carers receive regular communication from the college in the form of newsletters, the website and reports on their boys’ achievements. Special academic evenings, targeted at the needs and interests of different community groups, have been particularly successful. Equality of opportunity is central to the college’s vision. The performance of different groups is monitored closely and any gaps quickly identified so that action can be taken to close them. Students have a strong understanding of the contribution they make to cohesion in the school and wider community. This is greatly enhanced by their first-hand understanding of cultural diversity. Mutual respect and understanding permeate the school and are celebrated through the community-wide Cultural Diversity Day.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The growing sixth form is a significant factor in the future of Newman Catholic College. From modest starting numbers, recruitment and retention are increasing rapidly, building on successful outcomes. Relative to their starting points, sixth form students make good progress. All of those who completed courses in Year 13 last year went on to university. Teaching is good and enhanced by a skills exchange and development programme with a high-achieving college. Students sum up their sixth form as 'motivational' and dedicated to their achievement. They are eager to remain involved in the college and wider community. They take advantage of a wide range of opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, fundraising for CAFOD and literacy support for younger students. They describe the sixth form as having 'zero tolerance' of any form of unfairness or discrimination. They are mature and reflective when discussing issues of culture and faith. This was exemplified by one student describing the impact a 'three faiths forum' had had on his thinking and how struck he was by the commonalities between different religious texts and moral teachings.

Leadership of the sixth form has recently changed but continuity has been assured by effective oversight from a senior leader. The new curriculum leader is passionately committed to further success and development. She energetically pursues experiences and activities that will widen horizons and raise expectations for Newman students. These have included residential visits to a prestigious university and a graduate associate scheme, which brings the academic experiences of a range of London universities into the sixth form and provides return 'taster' visits.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

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Views of parents and carers

A lower than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire, but there was strong support for the college amongst those who did. The very large majority agreed that their son enjoys college, that the teaching is good and that behaviour is well managed. Most agreed that the college makes sure that boys are well prepared for the future, but in lower numbers than for other questions. The inspection team found the college's work in preparing students for the future to be good, with almost all boys progressing to work, training or further and higher education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newman Catholic 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 517 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	49	33	45	2	3	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	32	43	35	47	2	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	41	55	27	36	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	38	41	55	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	32	43	38	51	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	39	36	49	4	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	42	35	47	5	7	0	0
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)	32	43	29	39	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	28	38	39	53	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	49	31	42	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	35	39	53	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	38	41	55	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	36	49	32	43	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

23 September 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Newman Catholic College, London NW10 3RN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your college recently and for taking time to talk to us so enthusiastically about the college and your learning. You are clearly very proud of your achievements and of the changes and improvements to the college, in which you have played a major part. We agree that your college provides a good standard of education. You achieve well because you are so well cared for and effectively guided and supported in your chosen courses.

More of you have opted to stay on into the sixth form this year, clearly appreciating the high expectations and excellent guidance that continue there. You demonstrate a very mature attitude to your college and many of you, throughout all years, want to give something back by taking on one of many responsibilities, such as school leaders, sports coordinators, or reading mentors. One of your teachers said that the college was determined to produce young men who are academically successful, but also 'large-hearted'. We can see the success of this in your attitudes and actions.

We were extremely impressed with the great respect you show for one another's different cultural backgrounds. Your college provides excellent opportunities for you to reflect on other people's experiences. You told us that behaviour has improved a great deal over the past few years and we found that it is good. In some lessons, it was outstanding because you were highly motivated and took responsibility for your own learning. Teaching is good and at its best when teachers challenge you and build your aspirations by demanding more from you. Examination results are getting better. We think they can improve further and that even more of you can make outstanding progress at Newman. We have asked the principal and senior leaders to make sure that all lessons are equally fast-paced and challenging and that teachers plan activities to meet your individual needs and test your learning with sharply focused questions. We have also asked them to ensure that all lessons are regularly as good as the ones where these things already happen. You can help by getting fully involved in every lesson and working hard to meet or exceed your target grades.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside
Her Majesty's Inspector

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