

# Cardinal Newman Catholic School A Specialist Arts and Community College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103743
<b>Local Authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	376959
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Matharu HMI

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>	1269
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Parnell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Buchanan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Sandpits Lane Keresley Coventry CV6 2FR
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	3–4 October 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 42 lessons from 40 teachers, including five joint lesson observations undertaken with senior leaders. The inspection team held meetings with staff, representatives of the governing body and groups of students. A meeting was also held with a group comprising parents, carers, community members and representatives of other agencies that support the school's work. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including information about students' progress, improvement plans, school policies, teaching records and health and safety information. They analysed 181 parental questionnaires, together with 171 questionnaires from a range of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and sixth form students and 46 questionnaires from staff.

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

- The progress being made by all groups of students, particularly in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching across the school and whether this is consistently of a good quality to suitably challenge students of all abilities.
- Inspectors considered how well the curriculum meets the needs of all students, including those in the sixth form.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in driving whole school improvement.

## Information about the school

Cardinal Newman Catholic School is a large comprehensive, drawing on students from one third of the city of Coventry. The school is consistently over-subscribed. The school receives students mainly from five feeder primary schools and has an increasingly diverse population in terms of students' ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Just over 85% of students are from White British or other White backgrounds, with a small number from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The sixth form roll has increased recently; the school works in the city's west partnership consortium with other providers for post-16 provision. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above the national average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

The school achieved specialist arts status in 2008. It also holds an Achievement for All quality mark and is a 'Change School' in a three year collaborative partnership with Creative Partnerships.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

Cardinal Newman is a good school with a number of outstanding features. Since its last inspection, the school has developed many aspects of its work and continued to raise standards, particularly at GCSE, for all groups of students. Despite this, there is no complacency but a real desire for ongoing improvement, particularly in mathematics where results, although steadily improving, are not yet as high as those achieved in English.

The headteacher leads a strong staff team with passion and energy. Together, they maintain a sharp focus on raising the achievement of all students so that they can move on with suitable qualifications. There is widespread understanding across the staff team that improving teaching and learning, together with rigorous monitoring and effective use of performance data are the critical ingredients for success. Consequently, the school has secured greater consistency in teaching and uses performance data routinely to inform staff about students' progress and highlight where further support is needed. This leads to consistently good progress for all groups of students, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable or disadvantaged. The school has achieved considerable success in reducing the barriers to learning for these students. These are important developments that have achieved the desired impact in improving results. Previously noted strengths in pastoral care, guidance and support have also been maintained and developed to an outstanding level. Students enjoy mostly very positive relationships with their teachers and express high levels of satisfaction with school life. The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school; the statement, 'I am delighted with the way the school has enabled my three children to achieve the best they can through constant encouragement and support. They have had a very good deal at this school', typifies the comments received during the inspection in support of the school's work.

Teaching is predominantly good with, increasingly, outstanding teaching emerging across the school. There are excellent examples of varied and engaging teaching approaches with a clear focus on meeting the needs of all students, but on occasions, when this is less successful, progress dips slightly. While the curriculum has developed well at Key Stage 4, further developments are under review in post-16 provision to ensure the availability of a variety of courses for the increasing number who wish to stay in school.

Given the impressive track record over the past three years in improving outcomes

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for students, the good level of teaching evident in the school and ambitious and well-focused plans for the future, there is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

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

- Accelerate and consolidate the current drive to raise attainment and progress in mathematics through:
  - developing the use of coaching partnerships to share best practice in the department and gain greater consistency
  - ensuring that through the school’s specialism all teachers support and reinforce the consolidation of numeracy across the creative curriculum.
  
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching across the school by:
  - ensuring that all students are suitably motivated and challenged through appropriate activities, particularly in mixed ability groups
  - sharing and disseminating the best practice in school through coaching partnerships
  - providing detailed advice to teachers following lesson observations on strategies to improve their teaching to the next level.
  
- Widen the provision in the sixth form in order to fully meet the needs and abilities of all students.

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

**2**

Over the past three years, standards have steadily improved to above national averages. This is from a broadly average position on entry to the school. Throughout the school, all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and others from vulnerable groups, make good progress and enjoy their learning. This is because expectations of them are high and the school’s provision is well matched to their particular needs. Students consistently make particularly good progress in English; the school is implementing strategies to ensure that all students achieve as well in mathematics, as results here, although on a clear upward trend, are below those achieved in English. When learning in lessons is outstanding, students are engaged in high quality conversations about their work. This is often in response to carefully selected tasks, which fully meet the needs of all abilities in the group.

Students concentrate very well in lessons, listen to each other and are used to reflecting on what they are learning and how well they are doing. In an outstanding Year 11 English lesson, students marked each other’s written work on the set text with maturity, presenting their marks for others to consider and challenge, if they felt it appropriate. Their conversations revealed excellent understanding of the requirements of analytical writing.

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Students’ behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and are reflected in their above average attendance and general enthusiasm for school life. Students feel extremely safe and well looked after and say that misbehaviour is dealt with effectively. They particularly appreciate the school’s efforts to promote internet safety. Many speak positively of various successes and contributions to school life across a broad range of activities. Students’ personal and social development is enhanced significantly by the opportunities provided for them to assume responsibility in both the school and local community and support the work of their peers. They make substantial contributions through sports leadership, arts events and other charitable work in the local diocese. Students are suitably reflective on school practices: for example, a number of students feel that the school could do more to support healthy eating habits at lunchtimes.

There are many opportunities throughout the school day for students to be reflective and spiritually aware, demonstrating excellent understanding of the world beyond school and compassion for those experiencing hardship. Strong international links and work on global issues effectively facilitate this, together with much thoughtful work undertaken in a range of subjects. Students are prepared well for their future working lives through the acquisition of strong team-work and communication skills. Hardly any of them leave school without entering into further education, training or employment.

*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

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## How effective is the provision?

Inspection confirmed that teaching is predominantly good across the curriculum with a significant proportion of it outstanding. The new extended lesson length has prompted training on how to achieve effective learning in these longer sessions. This has resulted in improvements in teachers’ planning, the inclusion of a wide variety of activities and a sharper focus on the promotion of deep learning in lessons, which is being effectively realised in most of the teaching. The pace of learning is sustained; students are motivated by the varied strategies employed and respond with enthusiasm. The use of technology to support teaching and learning is consistently effective. Relationships are supportive with students clearly enjoying good rapport with their teachers. When teaching is outstanding activities are finely tuned to the needs of students of different abilities in the group. This ensures that everyone remains suitably challenged at all times. For example, in an outstanding gymnastics lesson, the teacher demonstrated and suggested alternative movements for students who found some aspects too technically challenging to include in their sequences. This inclusive approach ensured that everyone was able to participate at an appropriate level. Occasionally, when teaching is less successful, such differentiation is less evident and progress slows unnecessarily. There is potential here to disseminate the best practice evident in the school more extensively.

Dialogue about how to improve work is often of an excellent quality. Students are routinely made aware of the assessment criteria and consistently assess their own and each others’ work with confidence. The school has developed an inclusive, broad curriculum together with an extensive enhancement programme. Specialist status has had a positive impact in terms of spreading creativity across the curriculum and using the creative partnership to improve engagement in learning and raise achievement beyond the arts subjects. There is much potential here to develop this work further. Procedures to provide care and support for students’ well-being and promote their personal development are exemplary. Highly effective work with partners and external agencies and well-coordinated interventions support students, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. As a result, there is clear evidence of improved attendance, achievement and aspirations for these individuals. For example, liaison and transition work undertaken with primary school partners is exemplary, with notable impact on the ease with which students settle into secondary school.

*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>

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**The effectiveness of care, guidance and support**

**1**

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

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, ably supported by a capable senior team. This team holds a clear and ambitious vision for the school reinforced by a determined commitment to continuous improvement. There is clear, accurate understanding of the school’s strengths and areas for development. Rigour has been introduced to systems to monitor and evaluate the school’s work, providing clear, accurate information from which to plan improvement actions. In particular, the improved attention to using assessment information routinely and rigorously to track students’ progress is a key factor in improving achievement. All staff members are held accountable for monitoring progress closely; consequently they are becoming skilled in this aspect of their work. Careful attention too has been paid to securing consistency in teaching and using the extended lessons effectively to improve learning; this has largely been successful. However, following lesson observations, improvement advice to teachers occasionally lacks detail.

Subject and pastoral leaders make strong contributions to the success of the school. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities in driving improvement and contribute strongly to the school’s continued success through effective leadership of their teams. Overall, the whole staff team are confident and capable with an impressive shared sense of purpose evident across the school.

Governance is outstanding. Governors demonstrate excellent understanding of the school’s work and priorities. They understand their roles in providing challenge and support for the school and are highly effective in promoting and supporting continuing improvement. Close attention is given to supporting students’ well-being. The school securely meets the statutory requirements for the safeguarding of students. Procedures are robust and consistently applied.

The school’s attention to promoting equalities and working with a wide range of agencies to support students from vulnerable circumstances is outstanding. This ensures that potential barriers to learning are significantly reduced. This is a cohesive school where students are integrated well in cross-age tutor groups. The school’s work goes beyond the school in promoting cohesion through the arts specialism, in effective association with many local community partners. With excellent links to schools abroad, students are also contributing well to the global community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</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</b>	<b>1</b>



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<b>school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form is expanding due to the school's inclusive approach and its success in raising students' aspirations, which is encouraging an increasing number to remain at school. School leaders recognise that this presents ongoing challenges to provide an increasing range of suitable courses that best meets varying needs and aptitudes. This remains a priority for further action.

Attainment improved in 2011 with students making good progress overall; they exceeded expectations in some subjects, such as English and design and technology. Teaching is consistently good, with some of it outstanding. It is challenging and well planned with a variety of learning styles employed. Excellent guidance is provided to support students to remain on track, with rigorous systems in place to monitor students' progress. Students are highly positive about the sixth form provision, indicating that they particularly appreciate the quality of teaching and value the excellent support and guidance offered to them. Despite the fact that many sixth formers indicated they would prefer separate sixth form tutor groups, in reality, they make strong contributions to the life and work of the school through the vertical tutoring system and many are gaining much from this experience. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding; there is absolute clarity of purpose with a real drive evident to continue to improve provision in order to raise achievement further.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
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	1

## Views of parents and carers

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A relatively small number of parents and carers returned questionnaires at inspection, given the size of the school. Of those that did, the vast majority were positive about the school's work, a number noting improvements in recent years. Several commented favourably on the excellent transition arrangements from primary schools, the good quality of support provided for individual students and some of the excellent teaching in the school. A very small minority of parents and carers who responded felt that instances of poor behaviour are not well managed in school; inspectors paid careful attention to students' behaviour throughout the inspection. They found that this is consistently good and that the school's procedures for following up any instances of poor behaviour are clear, robust and consistently applied.

## 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 Arts and Community 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 insert 181 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	39	97	54	10	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	61	34	106	59	11	6	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	45	25	106	59	19	10	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	31	101	56	16	9	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	48	27	105	58	18	10	3	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	43	24	114	63	15	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	23	109	60	19	10	3	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)	63	35	87	48	17	9	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	48	27	116	64	11	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	29	89	49	21	12	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	18	101	56	20	11	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	60	33	92	51	12	7	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	69	38	93	51	11	6	1	1

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](http://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"><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.**

7 October 2011

Dear Students



**Inspection of Cardinal Newman Catholic School A Specialist Arts and Community College, Coventry, CV6 2FR**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed observing your work and talking with many of you. Your views are important to us and we appreciated your friendliness, courtesy and cooperation. Your pride in Cardinal Newman was very clear to us and we noted your appreciation of both the school's atmosphere and wide range of opportunities provided.

We found that your school provides you with a consistently good education and you are right to be proud of it. Teaching is good overall and the curriculum on offer is wide and varied, providing you with every opportunity to succeed. Consequently, the standards reached are above average and the progress that all groups of students make by the end of Year 11 is good. We were particularly impressed with the outstanding care and support provided. This is because your teachers know you well, care about your progress and do their best to meet your needs.

The school attaches great importance to developing your personal and social skills and qualities. The very positive, supportive atmosphere evident in school is fundamental to this. We noted your consistently good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Many of you are involved in the wider life of the school and told us how much you value the very wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities available to you.

Your school is extremely well-led and managed. Your headteacher provides outstanding leadership, supported very ably by an excellent team of staff and governors. They are determined to maintain the improvements we noted to ensure that you all achieve as highly as possible. We have asked the senior staff to ensure that the improvements underway in mathematics are accelerated and to check that teachers in all subjects are planning activities that suitably stretch and challenge all students. We have also asked them to press on with the improvements underway in sixth form provision so that all students are enrolled on suitable courses and can achieve highly.

We wish you well and look forward to hearing of your future success.

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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