

John Henry Newman Catholic College

Chelmsley Road, Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham, B37 5GA

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Many students enter the academy with low reading, writing and mathematical skills. They make good and in some cases outstanding progress. Achievement is good and rapidly improving.
- In 2012 students' attainment compared favourably with national averages.
- The academy's checking and review of its teaching are consistently accurate. Professional development opportunities for staff are excellent and have significantly improved teaching.
- Inspectors found teaching to be consistently good or better. Students respond very positively to the well planned lessons provided.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Students work very well together, have a very positive attitude to learning and feel safe. They are very courteous and immensely proud of their academy.
- Attendance has improved significantly since the academy opened and is in line with national data.
- The academy supports its students very well, particularly those who find learning difficult. Support and challenge is highly personalised and very focused.
- The academy has used additional government funding very effectively to support a wide range of students in need of extra help. The progress of these students is often outstanding.
- The sixth form is good. It is small but rapidly growing and well organised. Sixth form students make good progress, often from well below average starting points. The students benefit from small teaching groups and personalised tuition.
- Outstanding leadership exists at every level. The leadership team has driven forward every aspect of academy life with vision, relentless energy and shared values.
- The academy sponsor, Bishop Challoner's Catholic College has been a vital factor, nurturing capacity and sustaining improvement.
- The governing body offers very effective challenge, assisted by the clarity of the information provided by the senior team.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 54 lessons including six joint lesson observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors assessed students' behaviour around the academy throughout the working day.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the senior team, students, members of the governing body, and nominated staff. The lead inspector also met with the principal of Bishop Challoner's Catholic College in her role as co-sponsor of the academy.
- Inspectors were unable to review responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) due to a technical issue. However, the HMI considered the very positive parental responses to the academy's most recent parental survey and analysed the results from 90 staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the academy's work and scrutinised statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions. In addition they reviewed the academy's evaluation of its own progress, the academy development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and examined senior leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

David Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alicia Welsh-Kuligowicz

Additional Inspector

David King

Additional Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is average and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national figure.
- The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is nearly twice the national average. A small number of children who are looked after by the local authority attend the academy.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or with special educational needs supported by the academy through school action is below the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is above average.
- A local authority-funded provision for ten students whose learning is within the autistic spectrum (autism) is part of the academy. The students are taught in mainstream classes, supported by specialist staff.
- There is no alternative provision.
- The academy has specialist status in mathematics.
- The academy meets the minimum standards required by the government (floor standards).
- The academy opened in January 2011 following the closure of its predecessor school. Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) visited the academy in May 2012 to monitor its progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the outstanding teaching now available secures outstanding achievement and higher standards by sharing the best practice across subjects.
- Work closely with the academy's feeder schools to enhance the students' reading, writing and mathematical skills on entry, to ensure they are well equipped for the opportunities the academy provides.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good; students' progress is improving rapidly in all subject areas. Most students enter the academy with low reading, writing and mathematics skills. Every subject area places considerable emphasis on improving the students' reading and writing skills. Increasing numbers of students make outstanding progress because of the quality of teaching consistently available.
- In 2012 attainment was hindered by the changes to the examination board procedures widely reported in the media. When compared with the revised national averages standards reached and in some cases exceeded the national figures, with the success rates of middle and lower ability students above expectations. Another consequence of rising standards is that the numbers of students who will take a GCSE in all of the English Baccalaureate subjects this year has risen significantly.
- Students who are disabled or who have a statement of special educational need make outstanding progress because of the quality of teaching, the early identification of need and the individual support provided. Those students with autism and related complex learning needs make outstanding progress because of the quality of support available on a daily basis. Provision for those who find learning difficult is very well organised and reviewed termly.
- Similarly, those students in need of extra help and those in the care of the local authority make outstanding progress. This is because of the wide range of personal and academic support provided, in part by additional government funding (the pupil premium) and supplemented by the academy's own funds. The progress of students supported by the pupil premium is stronger than the good progress made by other students in the academy. Those who have received individualised support during the last year progressed more rapidly than the rest of the students, making a year's progress in English and mathematics in six months.
- Senior staff review and revise the organisation of subject teaching on a regular basis to ensure individuals progress well. Target setting is very well organised; the students' are given minimum expected progress levels which are significantly above national expectations. The use of early entry to GCSE examinations is very effectively managed to make certain that students can achieve well and then move on to more demanding courses.
- Standards in the sixth form are close to the national averages for vocational subjects and rising across a range of academic subjects. The average points score per examination entry was below the national average at A level and AS level. This represents good progress for these students whose individual starting points were often well below the national average.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching has improved significantly since the HMI monitoring visit in May 2012 when three quarters of the lessons observed were good or better. During this inspection the overwhelming majority of lessons were good or better, a figure that matched the detailed records maintained by the academy. This relates impressively to the good and outstanding progress made by students. Nearly half of all lessons secured outstanding learning.
- Teaching is strong in all subject areas. Subject teams are highly effective and students often express confidence in the availability and nature of the personalised support provided by staff during breaks or out of school hours.

- Lesson planning is detailed and thorough, showing teachers' strong personal knowledge of the students. Marking is consistent and students commented positively on the support provided.
- Lessons are particularly well focused on gaps in the students' prior learning. In an outstanding Year 10 mathematics lessons, for example, students who had struggled with the calculation of area were encouraged to explain their own strategies to the class; misconceptions were swiftly clarified, the use of accurate mathematical language secured, and students' confidence boosted.
- Teachers show expert subject knowledge which is used very effectively. For example, in a particularly impressive Year 7 art lesson, the teacher brought together contrasting 'still life' resources from a wide range of cultural and moral contexts that kept the students spell bound in their drawing task.
- Teachers ask probing questions and seek to create high level discussion in every lesson. Students work well in small groups and staff use this time effectively to tackle the gaps in the students' knowledge related to their previous education. Teachers and support staff use subject-specific vocabulary effectively to help students improve their writing and speaking skills. For example, in wonderful drama lesson, students made excellent progress in speaking and listening as the teacher created and manipulated small role play exercises.
- Effective small group and individual teaching and mentoring have resulted in significant progress for those students involved in 'catch up' reading programmes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students have very positive attitudes to learning and life within the academy. Attendance has risen rapidly since the academy opened and is currently in line with the national average. This improvement is the result of the rigorous monitoring of attendance, high expectations of students and their families, and improved communication with parents and carers. The pastoral teams make attendance a feature of every tutorial session.
- Punctuality in the mornings and to lessons is very good. Students move around the corridors and staircases in easy social groups and without wasting time; lessons often start early because all pupils have arrived promptly.
- Students have a very good understanding of safety matters, particularly e-safety. They state that bullying, racism and discrimination are rare and dealt with very effectively. Older students are considerate of younger ones and all have a strong sense of right and wrong, exercising notable social and moral values with others students and adults. HMI took many formal and informal opportunities to speak with students: when asked about behaviour, one young man noted, 'If the world followed our example it would be a better community!'
- Staff supervision is low-key although well distributed. Students are keen to engage staff and visiting adults in conversation when out of the classroom and clearly appreciate the interest of staff in them as individuals.
- Shortly before the inspection the academy's Parent View website had been subjected to a malicious attack. HMI took the opportunity to read the academy's own questionnaire. Those who had responded were very positive, being pleased with behaviour, the support provided, and the transformation of teaching. Such views were entirely confirmed by discussions with students.

- The number of students on roll is set to rise significantly this September with a large increase in the number of families making the academy their first choice secondary school. External applications for a place in the sixth form are also rising.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Creating a new academy from the remains of a failed predecessor school requires a very strong leadership team, subject leaders with talent and energy, pastoral staff and systems the students value, teachers, support staff and governors who want to be involved and who give their time and expertise every day. Vital to the whole project is a sponsor who can offer advice, experience and role models at every level. All need to be determined to improve the educational opportunities available in the community; John Henry Newman Academy is blessed in all of these respects.
- The principal and her senior team unwaveringly communicate high expectations and lead by example. Staff and students have a very positive opinion of the principal's leadership. The academy provides exceptionally well for all its students' needs and ensures that they are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- The monitoring of teaching by senior staff is rigorous and consistently accurate. From this secure performance management structure, an exceptional range of staff development opportunities is provided that have driven forward the improvement in teaching since the academy opened. The senior leaders worked alongside HMI in the joint evaluation of teaching and the views they expressed consistently matched the judgements given by the inspectors.
- Self-evaluation is robust and the academy's actions are carefully planned, concerted and very effective. The performance management targets set by the governing body for the principal, and by the senior team for every member of staff, are linked to improvements in teaching and provision.
- Pupil premium funds are used particularly well. The improvements made in English, mathematics and help for those who find learning difficult have been supported by this government funding and the academy's own resources.
- The senior staff have built very effective subject and project teams at every level. The working relationships between these teams, held together by over-arching projects as subject literacy, have been a significant factor in the successful drive for high standards in every subject.
- The curriculum provides effectively for learning for all groups of students, including disabled students and those in need of extra support. Adjustments to the curriculum to meet individual needs have secured very positive attitudes to learning and rising standards. Many GCSE courses begin in Year 9 and this has created good opportunities to study higher level courses in the same discipline once good GCSE grades have been secured. Many students made it clear to inspectors they were being guided to 'a place at a top university or a top apprenticeship'.
- The clarity and extent of information provided to the governing body is remarkable. Senior staff communicate effectively with stakeholders, parents and carers. For example, the academy's website make very clear how it uses the funds received through the pupil premium to raise standards.
- The academy is systematically supported by the sponsor and the Diocese of Birmingham.

■ The governance of the school:

- The majority of governors are also experienced members of the Bishop Challoner’s Catholic College governing body, the academy’s sponsor. Such expertise has been a critical part of the school improvement successes secured to date. Governors are very well trained and are fully informed about how the academy is performing. The governing body provides exceptional challenge because of the clarity of information available from a senior management team with a relentless focus on high-quality education for all. The governing body is knowledgeable and consistently compares the academy’s progress to the standards secured at the sponsor academy. Governors make regular visits to the school and understand where teaching is most effective. They check the impact of senior staff reviews of teaching and ensure that teachers’ progress through the pay scales is related to their effectiveness in raising standards. Governors set targets for the principal, and check carefully how well these are being met. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and closely monitor the impact of this and all other spending to ensure that the academy’s budget is being used efficiently to help pupils make rapid progress. The academy and its co-sponsors have a strong connection to the local community. The governing body ensures that requirements for the safeguarding of students are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136347
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	399830

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	958
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Russell
Headteacher	Jennifer McGuirk
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 770 5331
Fax number	0121 770 0055
Email address	office@jhnc.org

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