

# Newman Catholic School

Lismore Place, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1NA

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough teaching is good or outstanding. The variable progress that students are making in lessons and the quality of the work in their books suggest that too few are making sufficiently good progress to be assured that the improvements in achievement in 2013 can be sustained.
- Although students' progress in mathematics is improving well, it is from a very low base and they are still achieving below expectations.
- The outcomes in the sixth form are not yet good. Recent improvements in teaching, the curriculum and pastoral support are having a positive impact but are not yet fully embedded to ensure sustained good progress.
- Most students eligible for the pupil premium are now making expected levels of progress, but the gap in attainment between them and their peers is not closing.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leadership is good. The headteacher, senior team and governors have a clear vision for success and a determination to drive the school forwards.
- GCSE results in 2013 are much improved, including in English and mathematics.
- A wide range of curriculum options and extra-curricular opportunities contributes well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. There is a welcoming atmosphere in the school. Students are respectful to adults and to each other.
- Students have confidence in the strong pastoral systems; they know they can always turn to staff for support and advice.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and its leadership.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 teachers in 39 lessons including two joint observations with members of the school’s senior team. Inspectors also held meetings with approximately 60 students from all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a local authority representative, members of the governing body, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and other school staff. Informal discussions also took place with staff and students.
- Inspectors took account of the 100 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 39 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of the governing body meetings, the school’s self-evaluation, and data relating to students’ achievement.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

Janet Palmer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Mel Ford

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Barbara Waugh

Additional Inspector

Patrick Feerick

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Newman is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students that the school has identified as disabled or having special educational needs, therefore requiring extra support through 'school action' or 'school action plus' is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is in-line with the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.<sup>1</sup>
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- One student in the sixth form attends an A-level class at the neighbouring Trinity School.
- The percentage of students leaving or joining the school at times other than at the start of an academic year is higher than that seen nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher supports the work of other schools in the region as Chair of the Carlisle Secondary Learning Consortium.

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

- Embed and sustain improvements in achievement overall and in mathematics in particular, by increasing the proportion of teaching that is good and outstanding. Do this by ensuring that:
  - students of all abilities are stretched and challenged in lessons
  - teachers' questioning enables students to think deeply and give extended answers
  - teachers spend less time telling students what they should be doing and more time actively engaging the students with their learning
  - numeracy is embedded across the curriculum
  - books are routinely well marked, with comments that help students improve their work.
- Ensure that students eligible for the pupil premium are achieving as well as they can in all subjects so that the gap between their progress and that of their peers closes rapidly.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form by:
  - sharing good practice between departments and subject teachers
  - maintaining rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning in all subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> The pupil premium is specific, additional funding provided to support the education of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years, children who have been looked after continuously for a period of six months and children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Over time students at Newman have broadly matched the attainment of students' nationally in English, science, languages and humanities but have attained less well than the average in mathematics. School data indicate that in 2013, the GCSE results of most Newman students were above the national average in most subjects, although not in mathematics where in spite of significant improvement they remained slightly below.
- However, evidence from the progress that students are making in lessons and the quality of the work in their books suggests that too few are making sufficiently good progress to be assured that the improvements in achievement in 2013 can be sustained in the future.
- The school continues to ensure that almost all students leave the school with five or more A\* to G grades at GCSE, which is consistently above the national average and demonstrates the efforts made by the school to ensure that no child is left behind.
- Higher-ability students achieve in-line with expectations in most subjects but do particularly well in science where the percentage who gain A\* and A grades at GCSE is above the national average.
- In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals were 22 percentage points behind their peers in gaining five good GCSEs with mathematics and English. Although the attainment of all students rose significantly in 2013, the gap between those known to be eligible for free school meals and their peers did not close.
- Students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium<sup>2</sup> are making good progress in English and mathematics. Literacy across the curriculum is a strong feature and students are expected to carry a reading book at all times.
- Year 11 students who took their GCSEs in 2013 had entered the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment that were similar to students in most schools across the country. The fact that their GCSE results were higher than the average shows that this cohort made good progress overall, although the progress of middle-ability students in particular in mathematics remained too low.
- For students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, the picture in 2012 and 2013 shows them attaining less well than their peers overall but case studies for individual students indicate that school support systems have ensured good outcomes for these students given their barriers and starting points.
- The school has had a policy of entering students early for GCSE mathematics and English. They have used the results to reset students' targets and introduce extra tuition for those identified as needing it. There is no evidence that taking the examinations in November has had a negative impact on individual student's results in the summer.
- Historically, students have entered the sixth form with attainment that is below that of other students nationally and their results at GCSE, AS and A levels have been low compared to national rates. Progress for the current AS- and A-level cohort are now meeting expectations and school data indicate that this is being sustained. Following exceptionally low retention rates at the end of the previous academic year, the sixth form is now growing, with 50 students in Year 12 as opposed to only seven in Year 13.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved over time but it is not yet consistently good. Teaching is too variable across the school; a significant proportion requires improvement and the quality of students' work is too variable. In discussions with teachers, too few were able to explain how they could improve their teaching to ensure that students' work was of a consistently high quality.

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<sup>2</sup> The Year 7 catch-up premium is for students who did not achieve the expected level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2.

- In the lessons where teaching was less effective, the pace was too slow because the teacher talked too much. In these lessons the students were given too few opportunities to think for themselves or discuss their developing knowledge and understanding with their classmates. In some lessons the activities were too easy for some and too difficult for others, resulting in both lower- and higher-ability students achieving less well than they might otherwise. Students spoken to in Key Stage 3 were particularly unhappy about the slow pace of some lessons.
- Features of the better teaching included high expectations, exciting and creative activities and a way of questioning students that enabled the teacher to judge their levels of understanding and challenge them to think more deeply and respond more thoughtfully. In these lessons students were keen and enthusiastic; they asked as well as answered questions, discussed their work and supported each other in their learning.
- The marking of students' books is too variable. In some subjects it is very good with students entering into a dialogue with their teacher about their work and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not the case for all subjects or teachers, and not all students who were asked could explain what they needed to do to improve their work.
- Good attention is paid to literacy in most lessons. Students learn to understand and use subject-specific terminology and their books are usually marked for spelling and grammar. Students are encouraged to read in tutorial and break times. Less attention is given to numeracy in lessons although it was evident in most science and technology classes seen.
- A rigorous system for monitoring teachers' performance in the sixth form has resulted in teaching that is now mostly good. However, these changes are relatively recent and have not yet fully impacted on the achievement of the students, many of whom joined the sixth form with low levels of attainment.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **are good**

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students are positive about their learning. Even when some lessons fail to fully engage their interest, they remain well-mannered and respectful. They show a pride in the school and in the new uniform which the student council were influential in introducing.
- The students spoken to said that there is hardly any bullying and when it is reported to an adult it is likely to stop. All were aware of their responsibility to report bullying if they witnessed it happening.
- Through work in personal, social, health and economic education and in assemblies, students are aware of the negative impact of name-calling, including using racist, homophobic and disablist language. They say that homophobic language in particular is still heard around the school but most teachers will challenge students if they hear it.
- Students respond well to the systems for rewards and sanctions and think they are fair and effective.
- Attendance rates are improving due to good monitoring of absentees and strategies to encourage them back into school. However, absence rates are still a little higher than the national average. Exclusion rates are significantly below the national average because of the very effective inclusion unit, and system of using internal exclusions where students can still access their full curriculum entitlement and support.
- Parents and carers, staff and governors are very positive about the good behaviour and safety of students.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Determined leadership is bringing about better outcomes overall. However, improvements in teaching are yet to be embedded across the whole school so leaders can be assured that the improved results the school is now enjoying can be sustained over time. Nevertheless, the capacity is there to improve further.
  - This is because plans to sustain improved achievement remain clearly focused on the quality of teaching. Teachers appreciate the opportunities they have for further training and are happy to go into each other's lessons to share best practice.
  - Senior leaders and governors manage the setting of targets for staff and reward them suitably. Teachers are very positive about the way managers monitor their performance and say that it is helping them to become better classroom practitioners.
  - Students are well safeguarded. Safety is addressed through the curriculum where students learn how to use social networking sites safely and stay out of harm's way on the streets, although they say that more could be done to teach them about protection against sexual exploitation.
  - The curriculum is good and a major contributor to improved outcomes. Attention is paid in all subjects to literacy and in some subjects to numeracy. The breadth of vocational and academic options meets the needs and interests of the students, and the wealth of extra-curricular activities contributes well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
  - The sixth form is well led. The head of the sixth form has reviewed provision and rigorously analysed outcomes for students. This has led to a number of developments including a mentoring scheme for students. As a result, the sixth form is rapidly improving; teaching is now mostly good and students feel both supported and challenged.
  - Parents and carers are very supportive of the leadership. The school maintains particularly close links with the parents and carers of students facing difficulties. Those who contact the school are happy that their concerns are listened to.
  - Leaders and managers at all levels are keenly aware of the progress of different groups of students and are working hard to ensure that no group falls behind. Governors are aware of the need to close the gap further between the performance of those eligible for the pupil premium and their peers and have approved the funding for teaching assistants to support this.
  - Equalities are addressed in the formal and wider curriculum, and prejudiced-based bullying and derogatory language are tackled. However, the school needs to ensure that all policies meet the requirements of the 2010 equalities legislation and the school's Public Service Equalities Duty.
  - The school engages well with a wide range of external agencies to provide support for all students, especially the most vulnerable.
  - The local authority has chosen a light-touch approach to supporting the school after capacity was seen to be improving after 2011. It monitors performance but only offers further support if the school chooses to fund it themselves.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors have a clear vision for the school and are aware of what needs to be done to sustain improvement. In particular, they understand the need to improve teaching and develop the sixth form. They challenge the leadership but do not always interrogate the reports they receive sufficiently well. In close collaboration with the senior leadership they have moved the school finances from a significant deficit following the floods of 2005 to a current position of solvency.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112399
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	428915

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

<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
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	621
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	58
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Shovlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	John McAuley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01228 404942
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