

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Honeysgreen Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside, L12 9HZ

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In recent years not enough students have made more than the progress expected of them from their individual starting points, especially in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent, with too much that requires improvement.
- Teaching does not always challenge students sufficiently and the pace of some teaching is not always rapid enough to engage students fully in their learning. In some lessons teaching does not involve students actively enough in their own learning to develop their skills as independent learners.
- Students do not always take enough care or pride in how they present their written work.
- In recent years the quality of leadership and management in the school has not driven improvement at a fast enough pace. Their impact on improving teaching and achievement has not been strong enough, especially in mathematics.
- Leaders are somewhat generous in evaluating how effective the school is.
- Forward planning does not check that actions taken by leaders and managers are having a positive impact on outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment is rising across a range of subjects, including English and science.
- Most students make the progress expected of them.
- The quality of teaching is improving securely.
- Students behave well and feel very safe.
- The quality of care, guidance and support for students is of high quality.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and enjoy the sixth form.
- The acting headteacher provides the school with strong and purposeful leadership. Leaders know what they need to do to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons in the main school and 10 lessons in the sixth form. The lessons were taught by 37 teachers. Inspectors looked at examples of students' written work across a range of subjects with a special concentration on the quality of students' written work in mathematics.
- Inspectors held meetings with: senior and middle leaders; a group of teachers; a group of teaching assistants; four groups of students; three representatives of the governing body including the chair of governors; and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation summaries; academic and subject development plans; data relating to students' attainment and progress; analyses of students' attendance; documents relating to students' behaviour and safety; records of monitoring teaching and learning; records of the management of staff performance; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 93 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Rothery	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Paul Latham	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School is a larger-than-average secondary school for boys in which some sixth form classes are taught together with students from a neighbouring school for girls.
- The vast majority of students are White British.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend vocational courses at Liverpool Community College for two days per week.
- An acting headteacher has been in post since Whitsun 2013 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement overall by making sure that all teaching is consistently good with more that is outstanding by:
 - making sure that the pace of learning is always brisk enough to sustain students' interest and that tasks set for students are consistently challenging
 - making sure that there is a consistent approach to developing students' skills as independent learners and involving them more actively in their learning
 - improving the consistency of the quality of marking and insisting that students always take pride in the presentation of their written work.
- Raise achievement further in mathematics, especially the proportion of students who make better progress than expected of them given their individual starting points, by:
 - making sure that the tracking and monitoring of students' progress is fully accurate
 - raising the expectations in all year groups of what students are capable of achieving.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, including governance, on raising achievement further by:
 - making sure that self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is fully accurate
 - ensuring that development plans are sharper by incorporating robust procedures for evaluating the impact of proposed actions on outcomes for students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because, in mathematics, not enough students make better than the progress expected of them from their individual starting points.
- In mathematics, the proportion of students making the progress expected of them is broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion making more than the progress expected of them has not kept pace with changes and over the last three years and has been below the national figure. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, analysis of students' work and discussions with students show that more students are now making faster progress because new leadership in mathematics has raised aspirations for students' achievement.
- The proportion of students making the progress expected of them in English is broadly in line with the national average. In English the proportion of students making more than the progress expected of them from their individual starting points has risen significantly and is above the national figure.
- From starting points that are generally in line with those expected for their age, students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has risen steadily across a wide range of subjects over the last three years, including English and science, and is average overall. Attainment in mathematics has also risen but at a slower rate than in English.
- The percentage of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is above the national average but not significantly so.
- Students say that they enjoy reading regularly. In lessons, teachers include opportunities for students to read out loud to others and they do this confidently and fluently.
- Attainment for the most-able students has risen steadily in recent years across a range of subjects including English and science because leadership has focused more sharply on tracking their progress more robustly. This improvement is not yet consistent in all classes, especially in mathematics, and overall progress of the most-able students is similar to other students.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form has improved steadily and securely over the last three years. From starting points that are generally below most sixth forms nationally, attainment has risen and is now in line with national averages. Overall progress is therefore good.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals attain above the national average for similar students in English. In mathematics, they attain broadly in line with the national average. In 2012 in comparison to other students in the school, those known to be eligible for free school meals attained approximately half a GCSE grade lower in English and one GCSE grade lower in mathematics. School data for 2013 GCSE results show that the gaps closed significantly following much sharper identification of students' needs and much more targeted use of the pupil premium funding. Their overall progress is similar to their peers.
- Students who are disabled or with special educational needs attain above the national figure for similar students across the country in English but below in mathematics. Inspection evidence from analysis of students' written work and observations of teaching show that the gap is closing securely in mathematics. Overall progress is as expected for these students. This demonstrates the school's increasing success in providing equality of opportunity.
- Until the summer of 2012 students were entered early for GCSE in English and mathematics. In recognition that this policy depressed students' aspirations and hence results, especially in mathematics, early entry to GCSE has been abandoned. The rise in GCSE results in English and mathematics in 2013 shows the early signs of success in the new entry policy.
- The school uses Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to provide focused support in literacy and numeracy for the lower-attaining students. School data shows that this has a positive impact on boosting students' reading ages and their grasp of basic mathematical principles.
- The small number of students who are educated at Liverpool Community College generally achieve well in their vocational qualifications.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Although the quality of teaching is improving securely, it is not yet good because too much requires improvement and, in mathematics in recent years, it has not had sufficient impact on driving students' progress at a faster pace.
- Where teaching requires improvement teachers do not always set tasks for students that are challenging enough. Nor does it have the necessary pace to keep students fully engaged in their learning. In addition, teaching that requires improvement is characterised by limiting the opportunities students have to find things out for themselves and being involved more actively in their own learning. These factors have the effect of slowing the progress that students make.
- In mathematics, teaching too often underestimates what students are capable of achieving because it does not always use information about students' progress effectively and too frequently it overestimates how well students are doing. New leadership in mathematics is tackling these weaknesses and, although change is not fully embedded, inspection evidence shows an improvement in the progress that students are making.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use expertly to challenge students' thinking and encourage their skills as independent learners.
- Where teaching is good or better, it is lively and engages students fully and actively in their learning. Students respond enthusiastically and with an eagerness to give of their best. Teachers ask probing questions and structure their lessons appropriately to challenge students of differing abilities.
- For example, in a Year 7 music lesson, a relentlessly fast pace took students on a step-by-step approach to appreciating keyboard techniques. Students responded with immense enthusiasm and made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding. Their enjoyment was huge with many out of their seats with enthusiasm to answer questions. They could not wait to put into practice on their keyboards what they had learned during the first part of the lesson.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively in lessons to support the lower-attaining students and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly but their comments on how students might improve their work are not always as clear or as helpful as they could be. Too many teachers accept work that is untidy and poorly presented without comment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- The vast majority of students enjoy their lessons. Students are well mannered and treat each other and the adults who work with them with respect.
- Students in the sixth form are very positive about their experiences and how well cared for they feel.
- In lessons, students are keen to give of their best but occasionally interest wanes when teaching is too slow or the tasks that they are set are too easy or too hard. This expresses itself in some passivity. Disruption to lessons caused by poor behaviour is rare.
- The number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions has declined significantly in recent years. Internal exclusion is used judiciously to send out a message about what is expected in terms of behaviour and to support students in learning to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour.
- Students say that they feel very safe in school because the care, guidance and support that the school provides are of high quality. They say that bullying of any kind is very rare and on the few occasions that it happens it is dealt with quickly and effectively. The school's own records of bullying incidents confirm their view.

- Students show good awareness of the importance of personal safety. They can talk knowledgeably about what may be potentially unsafe situations and how to deal with them or avoid them. They are acutely aware of the risks posed by the internet and social websites.
- Although attendance is below the national average, it is on a rising trend and in the school year 2012 to 2013 it was close to the national average because new leadership has made it a priority and has introduced very effective systems for checking on absence and promoting the importance of regular attendance.
- The large majority of parents responding to Parent View agree that behaviour is well managed. Few responses expressed any concerns.
- The highly effective care, guidance and support, underpinned by the school's strong Catholic ethos, ensure that students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very strong.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Despite a trend of rising achievement in many subjects, including English and science, leadership and management have not brought about rapid enough improvement until recently, especially in mathematics. The school has had too positive a view of its performance and until recently did not give enough attention to weaker aspects and to checking that changes were effectively raising outcomes. Consequently, leadership and management require improvement.
- The acting headteacher has now gained a more accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve at a faster pace, especially in mathematics. Student's achievement has been overestimated especially in mathematics, and this provides teachers and the school with a somewhat distorted view of how well students are doing.
- Decisive action has been taken to make the tracking of students' progress towards more demanding targets more accurate and robust. These actions are starting to bring about the necessary improvements, especially in the progress students make in mathematics, but the full impact has yet to be felt.
- Forward planning is better. Leadership evaluates what is working well and what needs further attention. However, it overestimates some judgements and this leads to a somewhat distorted view of how effective the school is, especially in how well students achieve.
- The school development plan identifies more accurately the necessary actions to drive the school forward at a faster pace. Middle leaders are extending their roles and action has been taken to improve leadership of mathematics. However, the focus on evaluating the success of proposed actions is not focused sharply enough to enable leaders and managers to gain an accurate picture of their impact. For example, the link between making the tracking of students' progress more robust and its impact on outcomes is not clear enough.
- A much sharper focus on reading skills and staff training in literacy, especially the role of more probing questioning techniques, is bringing about improvement to teachers' understanding and practice in developing students' skills in literacy and communication
- Leaders and managers monitor teaching more robustly but responses to identified weaker aspects are not yet secure. Leaders hold teachers to account and manage their performance regularly and rigorously. The outcomes are used effectively and objectively to decide on promotions up the teachers' salary scale.
- The acting headteacher has brought about significant changes to the curriculum to make sure that students' skills in basic mathematical skills are more firmly established in Key Stage 3. This, together with a change to early entry for GCSE in Key Stage 4, makes sure that students' needs are better met and that achievement, especially in mathematics, is improving securely.
- Students praise the wide range of very popular enrichment activities such as in sports and the arts in both the main school and the sixth form. These activities add significantly to the high quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has forged strong relations with parents, the vast majority of whom are supportive of the school.

- Policies and procedures for safeguarding students are fully in place.
- The local authority is aware of the improvements required and provides appropriate support to develop the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed to the success of the school. The governing body is holding leaders and managers increasingly effectively to account but, in the past, has been slow to challenge sufficiently to bring about more rapid improvement in achievement in mathematics. Governors now use information about the school's performance to increasingly good effect to compare its effectiveness with other schools both locally and nationally to identify where it could do better. It is fully aware that achievement in mathematics is not as high as it should be and is asking the necessary questions of leadership to make sure that achievement and the quality of teaching and subject leadership improves. The governing body is aware of the quality of teaching and fully understands the operation of performance management and monitors closely its links with salary progression. The governing body has a firm grasp on the school's finances, including the effective allocation of pupil premium funding to close the gap in attainment between students who are supported by it and those who are not. Most governors take part regularly in relevant training so that they keep abreast of developments and hold the school to account for its effectiveness.

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	104714
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	424591

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,403
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Tremarco
Headteacher (acting)	Karen Smyth
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2009
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