

Cardinal Newman Catholic School

The Upper Drive, Hove, East Sussex BN3 6ND

Inspection dates

9–10 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Some pupils do not make as much progress as they should, especially those who are disadvantaged.
- There are wide gaps between the results of most disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Teaching is not always challenging enough to inspire pupils to aim high. Some pupils find work too easy.
- Teachers do not have a clear set of minimum requirements for the standards they are to expect from pupils. Pupils' work is often scruffy, incomplete or missing.
- There is too much low-level disruption in lessons and some poor behaviour. Not all staff, pupils or parents are confident that it is managed well.
- Some pupils are boisterous as they move around the campus.
- Governors do not always fulfil their statutory duties in a timely and effective manner.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not all attend as well as they should.
- Leaders have acted decisively to address historic weaknesses in some aspects of management, but the impact of this is yet to be seen consistently.
- Leaders have a strong moral purpose for the school and a clear vision of how they want it to develop. Not all teachers share this vision or consistently follow the lead.

The school has the following strengths

- The pastoral care afforded to vulnerable pupils enables them to make the most of their time in school.
- Learners following traditional A-level subjects attain results that compare favourably with other learners nationally and are broadly in line with expectations.
- Recent improvements to safeguarding arrangements, including to the perimeter security and staff training, mean that a large majority of pupils are safe at all times.
- The school's clear Catholic ethos provides a helpful contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders drive forward, with pace, the recent changes to the way in which the school is managed by:
 - evaluating critically each new initiative, dispensing with any that do not produce the intended outcomes and enforcing those that do
 - insisting on the full operation of all procedures by all staff, including safeguarding and behaviour management practices and setting homework in keeping with the school's policy
 - feeding back quickly to parents the outcomes of investigations into alleged bullying incidents
 - checking more systematically the quality of teachers' work.
- Ensure that staff fully understand and operate the school's minimum acceptable requirements for all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment such as:
 - planning lessons that cater appropriately for the potentially wide range of pupils in each class, notably those who are disadvantaged
 - challenging poorly presented, unfinished or carelessly completed work
 - providing feedback to pupils that motivates them to improve their work so as to make faster gains in their learning.
- Improve attendance and reduce truancy by:
 - improving teaching so that pupils are inspired to be in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils understand the importance of being in school as much as possible
 - initiating a rigorous system of checking pupils on- and off site, especially for Year 11, at break- and lunchtimes
 - working even more closely with families, and statutory and non-statutory agencies, to reduce absence rates among disadvantaged and disabled pupils, and pupils with special educational needs.
- Close quickly the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers and other pupils nationally, especially in English.

An external review of governance is recommended.

An external review of the use and impact of the pupil premium is also recommended.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The senior leadership team is in the process of re-organising itself with the help of the governing body. This process has been under way for some time. There are times when leaders have been distracted from the core function of leading teaching and learning robustly. Until recently, leaders did not always have a clear picture of all the resources at their disposal. Some of their efforts to make necessary changes were frustrated.
- The headteacher has provided stability and thoughtful leadership in turbulent times. He recognises the need to redouble efforts now and focus on the school's most urgent priorities. Other senior leaders share with him a sound understanding of what the priorities are. Leaders have begun to implement necessary changes. It is too early to judge the impact of these changes or how effective they will be.
- Leaders are aware that the school's generally strong performance in measures of its attainment sometimes masks weaker performance in the rates of progress pupils make. For example, disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as their classmates or other pupils nationally.
- With the help of external support, leaders are reviewing the school's development plan. This is so that it is a robust tool for measuring the impact of actions on improvement and the pace of change. Currently, the plan lacks focus and real attention to detail. External supporters and representatives of the local authority have an accurate view of the school's performance. They know what needs to improve and are helping leaders to address the challenges systematically.
- Leaders are ambitious for the school. They are proud of its ethos and culture. Leaders believe that the school provides a strong educational experience for all its pupils. Not all pupils agree. A significant minority of parents do not agree either. Some of the most-able pupils commented that they would like greater challenges in their lessons, harder work and more homework. This is because they wish to excel. On average, pupils enter the school having achieved well in primary school and want to do even better in their secondary education.
- Leaders ensure that a wide curriculum exists. There is an extensive range of subjects for pupils to choose from at GCSE level. They are prepared well for their choices by being able, for example, to sample three modern languages in Year 7. This means that a majority meet the standard for the English Baccalaureate. Leaders have already extended the range of courses available at levels 1 and 2 on vocational pathways, which are better suited to the needs of some pupils. The provision of a rugby academy builds on the successes of the school's physical education and sports team. This means that talented young men have the opportunity to study and develop as rugby players simultaneously. The proposed extension of this to a girls' football academy is a further positive addition to the curriculum.
- Subject leaders are suitably prepared for their roles and ably line managed. They are increasingly holding their teams to account and checking the work of their staff. This has not always been as effective as necessary and has not had the impact it should on standards. Only recently have teachers been uniformly held to account for the progress made by each of their classes.
- Leaders are able to judge the quality of teaching accurately. They have been, over time, less successful in challenging teachers to improve their performance when it falls short of the school's expectations. Swift improvements to teaching are, therefore, not always sustained.
- Leaders make sure that, for the most part, staff are trained regularly. They also try to match training broadly to the school's development needs. At the beginning of each year, staff receive mandatory training on safeguarding. Not all staff found this training to be effective and some were still not clear enough about child protection procedures.
- Within the context of the school's clear Catholic ethos, leaders and chaplains make sure that pupils receive teaching to prepare them for life in modern, diverse Britain. Pupils generally treat each other with respect and take account of other people's views. In a majority of form groups, pupils have the chance to practise living in a democracy through participation in elections for pupil councils. Pupils told inspectors that they were pleased to have been able to negotiate wearing cotton shorts in the summer.
- Pupils adapt well to new arrivals in the school. They welcome those who have arrived from overseas and support those who are new to learning and working in the medium of English. The effectiveness of additional catch-up funding is not clear. Leaders have only taken full control of these funds in the last few months.

■ The governance of the school

- The governance of the school requires improvement. Governors do not always ensure that information about important aspects of the school's work is published in a timely manner on the website, for example, information about the use and impact of pupil premium funding (additional money from the government for eligible pupils).
 - Governors have not acted quickly enough in the past to address robustly concerns raised by parents, such as allegations about bullying. They were, for too long, dependent on incomplete or partial management information. For example, information about staffing requirements, especially teaching assistants, was not always transparent. Consequently, holding staff to account lacked rigour.
 - Recent improvements to governors' practice have not had sufficient time to convert into better outcomes for all pupils.
 - The reconstituted governing body, which came into being in September 2015, contains a high proportion of personnel with very particular interests in the school. Staff are co-opted as required and parents form the majority of foundation governors. Two of the governors interviewed during the inspection are former pupils of the school themselves as well as being current parents. They are fiercely loyal. However, until recently, they had an over-generous understanding of how well the school was doing. They are beginning to understand that the performance of a school is no longer judged only on the basis of pupils' examination attainment. As a result, they are now challenging the underperformance of disadvantaged pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are broadly effective. However, there are some immediate issues to be addressed. Of pressing concern are: the way in which pupils in Year 11 record their departure from and return to the campus; an unstable stairway between classroom blocks; and a means of identifying learners on 16–19 study programmes while they are on site. Leaders' communication with parents about the outcomes of investigations into safeguarding incidents such as bullying requires improvement.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across subjects and within departments. Teachers are not required to follow a school-wide set of expectations, such as using information about what pupils already know, understand and can do to support their planning. Consequently, groups of pupils, often those who are disadvantaged, do not respond strongly or well to aspects of teaching in different departments or subjects. As a result, progress and rates of success are accelerated over time in some lessons but are held back in others.
- Teachers routinely plan the same work for all pupils regardless of the potentially wide range of abilities in each class. Some find the work too hard and many find the work too easy. Pupils told inspectors that sometimes work is the same as when they were in primary school.
- Too little teaching is inspiring, so pupils come to school out of a sense of duty rather than excitement. They are not consistently passionate about learning. One pupil summed this up neatly, 'I feel our curriculum rarely encourages scientific exploration and generally leaves pupils ignorant of the wonders of science'.
- Not all teachers set homework in accordance with the school's expectations or policy. Consequently, homework does not consistently provide real support for all pupils' learning. It is often poorly recorded in pupils' journals. A significant minority of parents expressed the view that their child did not receive appropriate homework for their age.
- Inspectors found inconsistency in the type and style of feedback provided to pupils. In some cases, feedback was specific and helpful. Robust assessment in A-level mathematics meant that pupils in Year 12 had dramatically improved their work. This effective practice was not seen widely across the school so that, in general, teachers' assessment of work is not yet consistently having the required impact.
- Some teachers' questioning does not deepen pupils' knowledge, skills or understanding. When most effective, teachers used dialogue skilfully to extend pupils' learning. In other lessons, pupils did not ask for help because they felt that they would not receive useful responses. Too often teachers provide pupils with tasks that keep them busy but do not accelerate their learning or deepen their understanding.

- The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to read. There are two libraries, one in Newman College that supports learners on 16–19 study programmes, and one for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. A large number of pupils in Years 7 and 8 withdraw books as a direct outcome of the school's recent focus on developing literacy. Library services are supported by professional librarians. Some form tutors encourage pupils to read during registration periods and engage them in meaningful dialogue about what they are reading.
- Time is not always used well in the hour when pupils swap between breaktime and the registration period. Some form tutors use this time well. This encourages their pupils to move between activities quickly. Some pupils move around the school boisterously during this time.
- Teaching assistants make a variable contribution to the progress of pupils. The leadership of learning support is undergoing significant change. Currently, a reallocation of roles and responsibilities is under way. This means that historical weaknesses in the deployment of this important resource have not yet been fully rectified. Consequently, some teaching assistants work highly effectively with pupils, while others provide support in ways that are not focused sharply enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement. This is because not all pupils are consistently safeguarded at all times. Pupils in Year 11 are able to leave the premises in breaktimes without recording their departure. There is no record kept of when they return. This represents a health and safety risk, for some pupils, in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- The duty of leaders, including governors, to check that all staff have been trained appropriately to safeguard pupils is not applied rigorously. While leaders were able to show that training in keeping with requirements has been provided, they are not able to evidence its impact on the practice of all staff.
- Not all parts of the site are secure and free from potential risks, for example, potential trip hazards. Leaders address this by arranging for adequate levels of supervision around the campus at lesson change times, and break- and lunchtimes.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the majority of pupils receive a wide-ranging programme of personal, social, health and relationships education which contributes well to their personal development. The programme helps them understand how to stay safe online. It also helps them understand the risks involved in alcohol misuse, substance misuse and self-harming.
- Leaders at all levels ensure that good pastoral care is available for vulnerable pupils. This is ably supported by the full-time availability of 'matron', who attends diligently to any medical needs.
- There is a strong programme of impartial careers advice and guidance provided by employed specialists in the field. This helps pupils make the right career choices and seek appropriate qualifications.
- The religious character of the school contributes well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. This is evident in the impressive chapel, and the wide range of assemblies and collective acts of worship, including daily class masses. Pupils' cultural development is further enhanced by a wide range of trips to theatres and musical events. The Newman Voices is a voluntary choir made up of pupils from across year groups and is a further example of how the school supports the spiritual development of pupils. They learn to appreciate music and perform it well.
- The vast majority of pupils are educated skilfully to be aware of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Teachers have also been trained to detect signs of any pupils at risk of this or any other danger. They are increasingly well prepared to report any concerns to the relevant authorities or appropriate bodies. Leaders are working to create a culture in which well-founded concerns are handled sensitively but with rigour. The local authority is supporting helpfully leaders' efforts in this aspect of their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Significant numbers of pupils, staff and parents informed inspectors that behaviour is not always good. They also commented that sometimes it is not managed well.

- Inspectors observed some boisterous behaviour when pupils were moving between lessons. The school provided inspectors with extremely detailed information which showed a high incidence of low-level disruption. It also showed several examples of more serious breaches of discipline, including truancy, 'failing to attend detention', verbal abuse and physical assaults. Inspectors did not witness this more serious type of behaviour.
- Inspectors did, however, record many examples of poor concentration when teaching was less effective. Inspectors also noted pupils complying with teachers' instructions but not participating eagerly in lessons. On occasions, some pupils exhibit poor attitudes to their own learning. Inspectors found many examples of work that was poorly presented, incomplete or missing. Work books seen were often scruffy or marred by graffiti. Teachers did not challenge this carelessness frequently enough.
- A few parents, some pupils and a minority of staff reported that bullying is not handled well.
- The attendance of pupils requires improvement. Rates of absence have improved in general recently but are still too high for current pupils in Years 10 and 11, and disadvantaged and disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs. The deputy headteacher responsible for pastoral care has acted decisively to improve procedures designed to improve attendance. With the help of statutory and non-statutory organisations, she is leading efforts to reduce further, and more quickly, the number of occasions when pupils are absent.
- Leaders recognise that weak attendance has a significant impact on pupils' outcomes. They provided strong evidence of their awareness of this and how their work is beginning to have a positive impact on rates of attendance for pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Leaders ensure that the school's current arrangements are extended to pupils educated offsite in alternative provision. This covers expectations related to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Disadvantaged pupils make slower progress than they should. A significant minority of other pupils do extremely well and go on to top universities. Many pupils, however, settle for broadly average outcomes. Teachers do not challenge all frequently enough to aim as high as possible.
- In 2014, the progress of pupils in English overall was below the government's floor standard. In 2015, this weaker performance was addressed and a higher proportion of pupils in Year 11 met this standard.
- Those who speak English as an additional language are supported well by other pupils and some of the teaching assistants. As a result, they do better than their peers nationally and as well as their classmates.
- Those who have fallen behind with their reading are provided with reasonable support to help them catch up. This support enables them to make steady gains but their progress is not rapid, which hampers their ability in other subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as other pupils nationally. There are wide gaps between them and their classmates. Unvalidated data for the Year 11 cohort in 2015 show that they achieved at least one less qualification than their classmates and that these were, on average, a whole grade lower than those of the other pupils. Although leaders are conscious of these gaps and aware of the need to close them, so far they have remained stubbornly wide.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do at least as well as their classmates and, on average, do better than pupils with similar starting points. Lower attaining pupils who do not have a specific barrier to their learning do not make comparable rates of progress as those who receive direct support. Pupils who receive support to catch up make broadly average progress.
- Overall performance at GCSE saw an improvement in 2015, with a rise in the proportion of pupils achieving the important benchmark of five A*–C GCSE passes including English and mathematics compared with 2014. This is now above national averages. However, the improvement was largely due to greater proportions of more advantaged pupils making better progress, including in English and mathematics.
- Some pupils do particularly well and a few parents took the trouble to write to inspectors to express gratitude to the school for helping their children 'achieve outstanding results' and preparing them well for the next stage of their education.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Learners in the school who follow traditional academic programmes leading to the award of A levels generally achieve well. There are particular strengths in mathematics, physics, religious studies and fine art. Good proportions of learners achieve high grades.
- The amount of value added to each learners' learning on traditional A-level programmes is broadly in line with national expectations. They accelerate their progress in Year 13 as performance in Year 12 dips typically.
- Learners on vocational programmes do not add as much value to their education as their counterparts. All, however, attain pass grades that enable them to move forward in their careers or on to the next stage of their education and training.
- Outcomes for learners who need to re-sit English or mathematics are not as good as they should be. The school provides continuous support for these learners during their time at Newman College to enable them to achieve at least a grade C in these subjects eventually.
- Teaching is usually better on the 16–19 study programmes than in other parts of the school. Teachers have the necessary subject knowledge to support learning at this level. Teachers access regular training as required to keep their knowledge of the relevant specifications fresh and up to date and to build on their extensive experience.
- Plans are under way for all learners in Year 12 to have access to a good-quality work experience placement, which will complement the existing robust system that provides learners with impartial careers advice and guidance.
- Learners on the 16–19 study programmes benefit from excellent facilities. They have their own canteen and common room. They have access to recreational facilities and opportunities to sit and work quietly on their own.
- The leadership of the 16–19 study programmes is effective. It is line managed securely by one of the senior leadership team who is frequently in the dedicated building. The team is constantly looking for ways to expand the range of programmes and to make Newman College more attractive to external learners. Currently, about two thirds of pupils transfer from Year 11 to 12. Others opt to pursue studies post-16 with local other providers. Many parents like the availability of level 3 provision within the context of a school.
- Leaders have had good impact on rates of attendance, which compare favourably with the rest of the school. This is despite the greater freedoms afforded to post-16 learners. This extra freedom is balanced appropriately with an expectation of junior leadership across the school. Many post-16 learners exercise voluntary leadership roles in support of whole-school activities. Others serve as positive role models for younger pupils.
- The strength of the school's commitment to supporting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is evident in the charitable generosity of learners on 16–19 study programmes. They live out and make witness to the school's overriding value, '*caritas*'.

School details

Unique reference number	114611
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10007276

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary-aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,265
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Domenica Maxted
Headteacher	James Kilmartin
Telephone number	01273 558551
Website	www.cncs.co.uk
Email address	reception@cncs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2012

Information about this school

- Cardinal Newman Catholic School is larger than the average school. It also houses Newman College, which provides a range of 16–19 study programmes.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly above average and some of these are recent arrivals to the United Kingdom.
- The proportion of disabled pupils identified as requiring support is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or and education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school draws its pupils from a wide catchment area across the city and beyond, which means that pupils are exposed to average levels of deprivation.
- The school benefits from a very stable pupil population.
- The school has increasingly active partnerships with providers of alternative education such as Road to Success, City College and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).
- The school plays an important role in the Brighton Association of Secondary Schools. The headteacher is a leading figure in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton's education division. He conducts external reviews of other schools.
- Brighton and Hove local authority provides support to the school through a challenge and support partner.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was scheduled in response to qualifying complaints of a child protection nature, and that these had been investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegation(s) were considered (where appropriate) alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements. Inspectors sought to establish whether:
 - all pupils are safe at all times and that their well-being is maintained
 - the school distributes resources equitably and evenly and in the best educational interests of the pupils
 - standards overall remain good for all pupils, especially those for whom the pupil premium (additional funding from the government) provides support.
- On day one, inspectors judged that more time was needed to explore the issues fully and the inspection was converted into a full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Six Ofsted Inspectors joined the inspection for day two.
- Inspectors observed learning in 49 lessons. On day one of the inspection, the lead inspector conducted an extensive tour of the site accompanied by one of the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors observed eight lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and one member of the team listened to a few Year 8 pupils read. Inspectors also considered 99 pupil responses to Ofsted's new confidential survey for pupils, and one letter presented to the team.
- Inspectors took into account 332 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online survey for parents. They also considered four letters from parents and a phone call that was received in Ofsted's call centre.
- Inspectors examined 64 responses to a confidential online staff survey. Nearly two thirds of the staff who responded were working at the school at the time of the last inspection. Inspectors met with a group of teachers, a group of core subject leaders and on several occasions with different groups of the leadership team. A few teachers sought out inspectors to speak to them individually.
- The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, the school improvement partner, a representative of the local authority and the director of education for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

Inspection team

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Adam Mirams	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Hobbs	Ofsted Inspector
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