

Inspection of a good school: Cardinal Newman Catholic School

The Upper Drive, Hove, East Sussex BN3 6ND

Inspection dates:

16 to 17 May 2023

Outcome

Cardinal Newman Catholic School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students value the support and encouragement which they receive at Cardinal Newman Catholic School. They are proud to be part of the school family. Health, welfare and well-being are actively promoted. School leaders work with determination to provide a high-quality education which caters for all.

Pupils are happy and safe. They know that they can talk with a member of staff if they have any concerns. The school works hard to prevent bullying and discriminatory behaviour. It makes exceptionally effective use of the equalities and anti-bullying ambassadors, who mentor and support younger pupils.

The school has extremely high expectations of behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations inside and outside of the classroom. The 'Positive Relationships (Behaviour) Policy' highlights the values of caritas, excellence and togetherness. Provision for pupils' personal development is first class. Relationships are exceptionally strong.

Pupils and students speak highly of the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities. These cover music festivals, field trips, adventure camps and visits abroad. Clubs include drama, poetry, manga, boys' dance and girls' rugby. In the sixth form, the curriculum offer includes dance, drama, golf, textiles, law and leadership.

The school provides high-quality careers advice for all pupils. The programme is judiciously supported through visiting speakers, work experience, interview preparation and university visits. Careers support ensures that pupils' and students' high aspirations are met and exceeded.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders provide an ambitious and coherent curriculum which is carefully sequenced and thoughtfully personalised. Teachers are experts in their subjects and ensure that pupils master content and develop their thinking skills. Teachers use assessment routinely to identify where further support is needed in order to close gaps in knowledge.

Literacy skills are supported well, and most books highlight pupils' pride in their work and presentation. Pupils' reading skills are screened on entry to the school, and additional support provided where needed. This includes well targeted intervention using specialist staff. Reading is further supported through library and tutor time as well as reading campaigns, audio books and class readers.

The school offers a full and packed programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), including relationships and sex education. PSHE is incorporated into form time and assemblies using visiting speakers to offer specialist advice. Curriculum links are developing across the school, but opportunities are sometimes missed to support cross curriculum working.

Subject leadership is strong. Subject leaders have a good appreciation of how their subject might be developed further. Staff are very well motivated and enthusiastic about their subjects. Targeted training is used effectively in order to promote teacher expertise. As a result, pupils and students make sustained progress.

GCSE examination outcomes are significantly above national averages. Many subjects are performing in the top 20% of schools nationally. Where this is not the case, leaders are providing additional support. Sixth-form outcomes are consistently strong. Significant numbers of students proceed to universities of their choice.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special needs and/or disabilities are identified, supported and encouraged. The school has developed a wealth of strategies to ensure that these pupils do as well as their peers. Leaders are developing effective systems for raising aspirations for higher prior attaining pupils. Support includes masterclasses, competitions and university visits as well as further mathematics, triple science and a humanities option offering both history and geography.

The sixth form has developed significantly over the past few years. Sixth formers are immensely proud of their college and speak highly of the excellent support they receive. Contact with their teachers is regular and fully supports their progress in lessons as well as their welfare beyond lessons. Opportunities outside of the classroom are extensive and appreciated. Students joining the sixth form from other schools comment on the phenomenal support received to help them to settle in.

Leadership across the school is purposeful and effective. Leaders work untiringly to provide a high-quality education which fully embraces the Catholic ethos. The leadership of the principal is particularly noteworthy. She is evaluative, engaging and unrelenting. She is well supported by a committed and dedicated team of senior leaders.

Middle leaders are encouraged through effective line management. All staff say that they are well supported and that leaders are considerate of their workload. Regular staff surveys ensure that staff are heard. Staff speak positively about their work. They say that they are proud to work in the school.

Governors are focused and confident about their roles and responsibilities. They are well attuned to the school through regular visits and the principal's detailed reporting. Leaders are held to account for the quality of education. The school works closely and effectively with the diocese and the local authority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a well-established culture of safeguarding. Keeping pupils safe is given the highest priority. Record-keeping and the single central record are robust. The single central record is checked regularly to ensure compliance. All staff receive timely training and frequent updates on child protection. They know how to report safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding leaders work with determination to ensure that all pupils are safe. They work cooperatively with external agencies. Pastoral systems ensure that all students have an adult they can talk to if necessary. Any issues arising are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is exceptional.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114611
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10268921
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2500
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	674
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gerard Silverstone
Principal	Claire Jarman
Website	www.cncs.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 to 31 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Cardinal Newman Catholic School is a much larger-than-average size secondary school, with a much larger-than-average size sixth form, which is known as Newman College.
- The school is a voluntary-aided school maintained by the Brighton and Hove local authority. It is situated in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2017.
- Ten pupils attend courses on a full- or part-time basis at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and three other known alternative education providers. A small number of pupils are being supported for their medical needs.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. For each of the deep dives, inspectors spoke to subject leaders about the curriculum, visited a selection of lessons, talked with subject teachers, spoke to pupils and students and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff, students and pupils. They examined the single central record, looked at safeguarding documentation and reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors looked at school policies, curriculum documentation, suspension statistics, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination information. The lead inspector met with governors and spoke to representatives from the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views and the further written comments provided. They reviewed the responses to the online surveys undertaken by staff and by pupils and students.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
James Rouse	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Potten	Ofsted Inspector

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