



Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103743
LEA Coventry
Inspection number 276988
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Ian Middleton HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Sandpits Lane
School category	Community		Keresley
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		Coventry, West Midlands CV6 2FR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76332382
Number on roll	1197	Fax number	02476335626
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr L Moore
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2002	Headteacher	Mrs Carol Buchanan

Age group 11 to 19	Inspection dates 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	Inspection number 276988
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Community College is larger than average with 1201 pupils on roll including 176 students in the sixth form. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has risen to the national average although a below average proportion have statements. Almost 90% of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups and those with English as an additional language (EAL) is below that of most schools.

The school serves a contrasting socio-economic area: overall the level of deprivation is average. A small proportion of pupils claim free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. After a period when improvement was too slow, achievement and standards at GCSE have improved significantly in the last year. The gap between achievements of pupils at Cardinal Newman and pupils of similar ability nationally has almost closed.

The strategic leadership of the headteacher and support of the senior leadership team are strengths of the school. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate, and improvement priorities appropriate. However, the impact of change is not yet consistent; there is too much variation in the quality of teaching and learning to say that effectiveness or value for money are better than satisfactory.

The different needs and interests of individual pupils are not always addressed. The school's initiatives to broaden the range of teaching and learning styles, strengthen the relevance of the curriculum and extend opportunities for pupils to enjoy learning beyond lessons are therefore well chosen. To maximise impact all staff and every pupil should show that every lesson matters.

Pupils value the care, guidance and support provided, which is good. Although the school has introduced measures to improve behaviour and attendance a small proportion of pupils and parents expressed the view that a few pupils do not yet behave as well as they should. Inspectors agree that learning for the majority of pupils is sometimes limited by pupils who show insufficient self-discipline or respect for others. Improving behaviour and eliminating bullying are rightly priorities of the school's improvement plan.

Partnerships with parents, support services, other schools and the community are outstanding. Capacity for further improvement is evident.

The school and its partners have established a secure basis from which to spread the effect and quicken the pace of improvement across the whole school.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is a strength of the school and both its effectiveness and efficiency are good. Many academic and vocational courses are offered at different levels. The school makes outstanding use of the North West Coventry Federation to extend the range of courses available. Students achieve well, many exceeding their target results at the end of Year 13. Sixth form students receive an exceptionally high quality of support, particularly in ensuring their learning is going well and in helping them with their choice of university course or employment. The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good, creating many and varied opportunities for students to develop in maturity.

What the school should do to improve further

•set out more clearly the quality of teaching and learning expected •develop a consistently high quality of teaching and learning •improve pupils' attitudes towards others, and aspirations for themselves •continue to improve the standards achieved as pupils progress through the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils join the school with typical standards for their age and make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. They reached above average standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004, continuing a gradually improving trend, and achieved similarly in 2005. In 2004, the progress made by pupils in Years 10 and 11 was inadequate, resulting in underachievement at the end of Year 11. Action taken since the appointment of the new headteacher from September 2004 has brought about a significant improvement in the results of GCSE examinations in 2005. Pupils now make satisfactory progress overall in Years 10 and 11. However, there is considerable variation in the progress pupils make within subjects and between different subjects. This is often the result of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, and the variable ability of pupils to take responsibility. This can be seen particularly clearly in mathematics and science: areas of concern already identified by the school.

Achievements in sports and arts events and consistently strong subject results in English, art and design, textiles, geography, sports and information communication technology (ICT) show what is possible.

The targets set for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those capable of achieving grade C at GCSE are appropriate. Targets for the most able need to provide the additional challenge that pupils say is lacking in some lessons. In the sixth form, students of wide ranging abilities make good progress. They achieve well and reach average standards at the end of Year 13.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The majority of pupils enjoy their education and students in the sixth form are very enthusiastic about their experience in school. The pupils' spiritual development is a strength. Cultural development is also emerging as an important feature of personal development for many pupils.

Parents and pupils have said that behaviour is not as good as it should be and inspectors support this view. However pupils are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the life of the school in an active way, and incentives, for example to improve attendance, are bringing about some improvement.

The school council is very active and is involved in addressing issues such as bullying, a concern raised by several pupils and parents. Tutor groups keep detailed scrapbooks that show the range of ways in which pupils contribute to the life of the school. Pupils are involved in fund-raising for charities and in a wide range of community based activities; the school is very much part of the local and world community because of its Christian ethos. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities and sports. Large numbers are involved in the current production of the musical Fame. Awareness about safety and health issues is good and most pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The high quality of careers education and guidance, and work experience ensures that pupils have insight into the world of work and recognise the importance of decisions that they make. Most pupils have the basic skills required although their application of numeracy and ability to take responsibility are not widely evident.

The school evaluates personal development as good across the school. Inspection evidence shows that although several features are indeed good it is satisfactory overall but outstanding in the sixth form.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. This view is shared by the school. The school improvement group have recognised the need to broaden the range of teaching and learning styles across the school. Inspectors agree: teaching is mostly satisfactory with a few lessons at the extremes, outstanding and inadequate.

At its best, the pace, variety, and challenging questioning by teachers gains the attention of all pupils. Alternative approaches are prepared to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Learning is enhanced by creative use of resources including ICT, although it is at an early stage of development as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum. Ineffective lessons proceed along predictable lines regardless of the response of pupils and provide few opportunities for pupils to get actively involved in their own learning. Inadequate behaviour management limits the learning of others.

An awareness of what constitutes good teaching is emerging from the school's evaluation of different departments and work of middle managers with proven success. However, it is also evident that some teachers find transforming teaching a challenge and require more direction about lesson planning, assessment and managing group work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory, an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils now receive their statutory entitlement. Smaller Year 7 groups have enabled teachers to give more individual attention to learners. However, the good links with partner primary schools are not widely used to build on existing experiences and achievements.

Developing the range and relevance of courses has led to improvements in standards in Years 10 and 11. Enrichment time focuses learning on building ICT and practical skills, and studying healthy lifestyles and money matters. Flexible learning programmes are available for a few students who combine school work with courses elsewhere. The sixth form curriculum is also developing with an increasing choice of academic and vocational options, an outcome of outstanding partnerships with other schools and colleges.

A good range of sports, arts, enrichment and extension activities provide opportunities for pupils to develop new skills and improve existing work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of provision is good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. The school has judged it to be good overall. Health and safety and child protection are fully in place, and the monitoring of behaviour and attendance is good. Pupils say that most incidents are dealt with well and issues such as bullying and the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils have a high profile because the school is committed to ensure the well-being and success of all its pupils. Tutors and year heads care for pupils well. Year group assemblies have a strong family atmosphere, pupils' achievements are shared, celebrated and rewarded in them. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well and there has been an improvement in the availability and training of support assistants. The gifts and talents of individuals are encouraged and fostered although above average pupils are not consistently challenged. Partnerships, community links and the use of outside agencies are outstanding features of the school and underpin the very good provision of careers education and guidance, work placement opportunities and the work related curriculum. Sixth form students speak very highly of all aspects of care and guidance, particularly the support they receive with applications for higher education or training.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has had a considerable impact in her first year in post, and has introduced effective strategies designed to provide the school with an enduring capacity to improve. Her evaluation of the needs of the school is very clear, well informed by the views of the school community, and is shared by a committed senior leadership team.

The headteacher has acted quickly to improve performance in key areas, concentrating appropriately on standards, the quality of teaching and the behaviour of the pupils. Her vision is widely shared by the staff, but the implementation of the actions required to bring about improvement is not always effective enough, and in some cases moving too slowly. This is partly due to variations in the quality of middle managers, an issue which is being vigorously pursued by the headteacher. For example, the inconsistencies in teaching are partly caused by the lack of a clear understanding of the planning required for a good lesson. The introduction of challenging targets for pupils is having a limited impact on raising standards, although data to do so is now available. The development of effective assessment for learning strategies is in hand, but its implementation is proceeding too slowly.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, and resources are well managed, with a significant contribution made by the new business manager. Governors support the school well and ensure that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The school not only knows its own strengths and weaknesses well but is pursuing the goal to be 'the best there is' by managing links with other schools and outside agencies effectively.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	4	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Community College, Sandpits Lane, Keresley, Coventry, CV6 2FR

Date: 31 October 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work, interests and plans for the future. Here is a summary of what we think you might like to know about our view of the school. You will also be able to read the full inspection report when it arrives at the school.

What we liked about your school:

your school is improving and is moving forwards

your standards of work and examination results are improving

your school works very well with others to provide good opportunities for you

your new sixth form and library block is something to make the most of

the vast majority of you want to do well at school

you appreciate the opportunities to do sports and other activities after school

there are some good teachers across the school that make learning interesting.

What we have asked your school to do now:

help you all to aim high for your future

help those pupils who behave badly or bully show more respect for others

help more teachers use approaches we have seen work in yours and other schools

help you to achieve even higher standards than the school has reached before.

We know that your headteacher is very committed to improving the school with you, your parents and staff at the school. Do your best to attend school regularly and make the most of the opportunities provided. Wear your new uniform with pride; we think that you can achieve the school's goal to make Cardinal Newman 'the best there is!'. It will need everyone to play their part.

Best wishes on behalf of the inspection team,

Ian Middleton (Her Majesty's Inspector)