

Cardinal Griffin Catholic High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124468
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	281732
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2006
Reporting inspector	Sue Harrison HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J F Lumb
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stafford Road Cannock Staffordshire WS11 4AW
Telephone number	01543 502215
Fax number	01543 574929

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cardinal Griffin is a Catholic comprehensive school set in a former mining area, with areas of significant social deprivation. It gained specialist status in science in 2004. Sixty five per cent of the pupils are Catholic and come from a broad catchment area. The non-Catholic population comes from the local area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups or have English as a second language. In September 2005 the school joined the Chase Collegiate, a post-16 consortium, which includes eight other schools and a further education college.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure all pupils achieve their full potential, particularly in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 by promoting systems to identify potential underperformance
- develop teaching that engages all learners and stretches the more able
- extend the work on assessment for learning so all pupils are given sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their work further.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching is satisfactory overall, including in the sixth form. There are some very good lessons which stimulate effective learning and many lessons have some good features. However, the school recognises that the quality of teaching is inconsistent and is taking positive steps in terms of in-service training to ensure that this is addressed. The best teaching uses good subject knowledge well to support learners. Lessons are well planned, breaking down skills into small steps to enable pupils to make progress. In these lessons pupils enjoy and take a pride in the work they produce. Relationships are based on respect; pupils work well together and help each other. Where teaching is weaker, planning is less effective. Teaching lacks challenge and tasks are not well matched to the ability of the pupils. This results in pupils not being engaged in their work. Lesson planning does not always address methods of extending the most able pupils. Assessment is also inconsistent. Although progress is monitored and reported regularly, this is not always backed up in all subjects by clear advice as to how pupils can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides a broad and balanced range of activities that meet the national statutory requirements. It has undertaken a fundamental review of the curriculum and is introducing changes to give pupils opportunities to progress at a pace suited to their individual needs. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these measures. The school is developing a wider curriculum for 14–19 year olds, for example by introducing more vocational options within the school and in conjunction with the local college. For example, some pupils in Years 10 and 11 are accessing courses in health and social care and motor vehicle studies. Some courses that were introduced as part of the school's science specialism did not fully meet the needs of pupils and these have been withdrawn and replaced by more appropriate provision. Post 16 students are benefiting from a wider range of vocational opportunities in addition to a satisfactory range of traditional GCE A-level subjects. A good variety of enrichment activities

enhances the formal curriculum. A wide range of activities is offered, including music, drama, computer clubs, visits and opportunities to contribute to community events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The school is rightly proud of its caring ethos and staff are vigilant of the needs of vulnerable pupils. Appropriate arrangements for child protection are in place. Teachers pay due attention to health and safety; however the school recognises the urgent need to improve the inadequate toilet facilities.

The school has systems in place for tracking pupils' progress and parents receive regular updates. Although some teachers give pupils helpful guidance on the next steps in learning, pupils are not always given enough support in lessons or through marking to know what they need to do to improve. Systems to target pupils who are underachieving have been strengthened in 2006 for Years 10 and 11; they are now being given additional support with their work. Academic support and guidance is good for post-16 students. Pupils with learning difficulties receive targeted support, for example through one-to-one and small group work. Pupils whose first language is not English are made to feel welcome and supported well. The school is addressing the deficiencies in careers education for younger pupils. Older pupils appreciate the good careers advice on the pathways they can follow on leaving school.

Leadership and management

Grade:

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know a group of inspectors recently visited your school. Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and your help in finding our way around and giving us your views about the school. I am writing now to tell you about our findings.

We think the school provides a caring and supportive atmosphere and that most of you enjoy coming to school. Your parents support the school well, though some of them would like to hear more about the outcomes of any concerns raised. The majority of you are well behaved and make satisfactory progress. You work hard and are kept interested in many lessons but in some the work doesn't challenge you enough and a few of you misbehave. Many of you enjoy the opportunities to take part in clubs and other activities outside lessons. You generally get on well with each other and with staff and you are developing good personal skills that will help you when you leave school. Students in the sixth form provide good support for younger pupils. The school achieves satisfactory examination results overall and good results in some subjects. We think some of the more able pupils could do even better in some GCSE subjects. The headteacher is aware of this and changes are taking place to identify where this is happening and to try and put it right. We have asked the governors and leadership team to make sure that teaching is sufficiently challenging for all of you and that you know what you need to do to improve your work further. They understand clearly what the school does well and what needs to be improved and we believe the school will be able to make further improvement. We wish you every success in the future.