

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103539
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286692
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2007
Reporting inspector	David Simpson HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	622
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John McCarthy
Headteacher	Martin Jones
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2002
School address	Old Oscott Hill Kingstanding Birmingham B44 9SR
Telephone number	0121 3606383
Fax number	0121 3666873

Age group	11–16
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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 Wiseman Catholic Technology College is a smaller than average secondary school. The majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is over three times the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school has specialist status as a technology college.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cardinal Wiseman is a satisfactory and improving school. The school is candid about its performance and recognises that standards have been below average and the progress of pupils inadequate in recent years. However, significant and effective action has been taken to address these weaknesses. Consequently, achievement is satisfactory and attainment is improving. Most importantly, the school has established a thorough system to analyse the progress of pupils each half-term and taken swift action to address underachievement. The work of each department is reviewed regularly and teachers are increasingly accountable for the pupils they teach and the staff they manage. The school has struck an appropriate balance between providing additional teaching and support for pupils identified as underperforming, and raising the aspirations of pupils and their families, for example, making pupils aware much earlier of the grades that they will need to achieve in order to pursue their career ambitions. The senior leadership team have introduced effective procedures to monitor teaching and have an accurate picture of its quality, which is satisfactory. Whilst many staff follow the school's requirements for lesson planning some are doing so mechanically and, consequently, these lessons are dull. Too often lessons do not address the needs of all pupils. Where there is challenge and an expectation that pupils will show independence and evaluate their work, they engage enthusiastically with their learning and make good progress. For example, in a drama lesson pupils constructively commented upon one another's performance and the sensitive but critical questioning of the teacher helped them to make quick progress. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, as is the care, guidance and support that they receive. Pupils enjoy their education. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. When teaching is stimulating and based on good relationships with the pupils, they respond positively. Pupils' behaviour around school is orderly and they get increasing opportunity to show responsibility as they progress through the years. The school council is relatively new and is beginning to contribute to school decision making. A strength of the school is the very effective strategies which have raised attendance. The majority of parents speak positively about the school although some expressed the view that their concerns were not always adequately addressed. Specialist school status has made a significant difference to the school. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used extensively in teaching and learning. Impressive links have been established with local industries which help pupils to engage with the world of work. Technology status has also supported developments in the satisfactory curriculum and the school is increasingly offering vocationally based courses which motivate pupils and raise their attainment. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Many developments have been introduced in the last year and, although these are at an early stage of implementation, they are already having a beneficial impact on the pupils' education. The senior leadership team are systematically raising expectations and introducing strategies that enable them to be realised. Middle managers are increasingly taking responsibility, identifying strategies to help groups of pupils and evaluating their success. School improvement planning appropriately recognises its Catholic mission and the personal, as well as academic, development of each child. However, the school acknowledges that its targets have not been as sharp as they need to be to better monitor the school's progress over time. Governors do not play a full enough part in identifying priorities. The significant progress the school has made this year demonstrates a sound capacity to improve over time, satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the aspiration and momentum to drive the school on. A small proportion of the school whose overall

effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the planning and delivery of lessons so that they better meet the needs of individual pupils.
- Make teaching consistently challenging.
- Improve the quality of school improvement planning and monitor the effectiveness of actions to improve achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The attainment of pupils joining the school at the start of Year 7 is below average and declining. Standards in end of Key Stage 3 tests are also below average. However, pupils have consistently made good progress in English. Their performance in mathematics and science has been significantly below average but pupils are increasingly meeting more challenging targets. Some underperformance persists in science. Not enough pupils attain the higher levels in these two subjects. As a consequence of improvements over the last year, the progress of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is now satisfactory. Results in GCSE and equivalent examinations have been disappointing in the last two years. Several significant actions have been taken to improve pupils' progress. These include the close monitoring of pupils' progress each half-term against challenging targets. Whilst these procedures need some refinement to ensure their consistent use across the school, the information they produce is motivating to pupils and their families. As aspirations are rising, the school is effectively identifying groups of pupils in danger of underperforming and successfully introducing strategies that meet their needs. These include tutoring, additional lessons and individual action plans. Consequently, lessons observed during the inspection confirmed that pupils are making satisfactory progress. With the exception of the very challenging targets for science, the school is meeting its specialist school targets for attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

There has been good progress in developing more positive attitudes to learning, for example by improving levels of attendance and punctuality and increasing the number of pupils who choose to continue their education and/or training after they leave Cardinal Wiseman. These positive outcomes have stemmed from a shared determination from pupils, parents and staff to raise achievement and foster more ambitious personal goals and targets. Effective monitoring and good communications between outside agencies, such as Connexions, are also key elements of this work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory. Some individual subjects and lessons make a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development but in the school as a whole, these aspects are not universally promoted. As a consequence, experience is variable and some opportunities are missed to develop reflection. Pupils are supported and encouraged to take an active role in the life and ethos of the school and some have embraced the opportunities enthusiastically, for example as members of the school council or as prefects. Many, though, lack the confidence to take on these and similar responsibilities. Steps taken to introduce a healthy eating policy have been successful and there is growing awareness of the importance of taking regular exercise. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for and that bullying is dealt with promptly and effectively.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning has recently improved as a result of training to enhance teacher effectiveness through improved planning and clear expectations of the features of successful lessons. Where these principles are consistently applied, lessons meet pupils' learning needs well and the results can be outstanding. For example, in a lesson on *Of Mice and Men* which focused on a detailed examination of the character of Curly's wife, the teacher's succinct explanations and her high expectations of pupils resulted in learners being engrossed in their work. However, in a significant number of lessons pupils are not given sufficient time to reflect and learn independently. Expectations are not consistently high and work is not always challenging enough because it is not always matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Pupils enjoy their lessons and behave well in the classroom, although a minority have not yet developed their listening skills sufficiently to take full advantage of the learning opportunities on offer. Computers are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and help them to learn. For example an interactive whiteboard was used to present appropriately timed addition problems in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, resulting in pupils performing well at a good pace. Teachers know the starting points of their pupils and are increasingly effective in monitoring progress. There are good examples of pupils evaluating their own work but this is not consistent across the school. Pupils know their current working levels and target grades but teachers' marking does not always give them sufficient information on a day-to-day basis about what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides adequately for the variety of pupils' needs. The range of subjects on offer meets statutory requirements and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. English and science offer a diversity of courses to meet individual needs. Current vocational courses are successful but are relatively limited in number. The school's specialist technology status has boosted the provision of ICT across the curriculum. Some of the funding has enabled a thorough analysis of pupils' views of their learning to take place, resulting in improved teaching. Pupils enjoy the courses provided for them and develop confidence and self-esteem where they have opportunities for independent learning or for everyone to take responsibility for work in groups. The curriculum provides adequate opportunities for personal development but the school recognises the need for a more structured approach in developing healthy lifestyles and careers education in Year 9. The present arrangements for teaching citizenship have some gaps. The school is currently reviewing its provision in personal, social and health education together with citizenship. Procedures for assessment of pupils in citizenship are improving. Pupils are given the opportunity to take additional lessons in a range of subjects after school. Extra-curricular activities are provided but these are modest, both in variety and the number of pupils attending the activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

A strength of the provision is the caring relationships in the school community underpinned by the Catholic ethos and promoted through the work of senior leaders. They recognise the

benefits of getting pupils to take a more active role in the life of the school and have the imagination to make this a reality, for example by creating opportunities and programmes that teach pupils the skills, and give them the confidence, to participate more fully in the life and decision making of the school. Where this is successful, pupils feel valued and proud of their efforts. Many such developments are still in the early stages of implementation, for example, the newly elected school council, but pupils are increasingly able to recognise the scope of the contribution they can make to the school. The restructuring and reorganisation of the pastoral and academic life of the school has begun to provide a clear focus for raising achievement and encouraging pupils to be more ambitious in their plans for work and further education. More pupils than in the past now go on to further and higher education. The work experience programme, opportunities to experience what further education is like, mentoring and links with local business have all made a significant contribution to raising their expectations. Child protection and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are to be given greater importance and visibility as new policies and curriculum plans are implemented.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership team have purposefully set about addressing previous underachievement. Recently introduced procedures to monitor pupils' progress and to regularly review the work of departments are promptly identifying areas for improvement and holding staff accountable. Impressively, the school has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. School improvement planning recognises the development and preparation of pupils for adult life. However, the school is aware that its targets are not sufficiently detailed to monitor the school's progress over time and that governors should be more involved in the early stages of identifying future priorities. Governors are well informed about aspects of the school's work, such as the progress of pupils, but have identified that their work would be improved if they spent some time visiting lessons and looking at how the school's strategies are making a difference in the classroom.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 April 2007 Dear Pupils Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College, Kingstanding, Birmingham B44 9SR Thank you for welcoming me and the inspection team into your school. We appreciated how you talked to us in your lessons, helped us to find our way around the school and shared your opinions about Cardinal Wiseman. We enjoyed the opportunities we had to see you learn, be involved in your assembly and the discussions we had with the school council which showed how ready you were to express your ideas. Your views and the views of your parents have helped us to understand what your school is like. Your school is one that is ambitious for all of you, expects you to do better and believes that it can help you to meet your aspirations. Results in exams have been disappointing recently but you are being challenged to do much better and that is evident in your lessons. The school is monitoring your performance and sharing with you regularly what you are likely to attain in exams and tests. You are making satisfactory progress overall during your time at Cardinal Wiseman and the school is ambitious for you to do to even better. We know that you will want your school to become even more successful. You will be pleased to know that our recommendations for what the school should do to improve further include that in your lessons you do even more of the work! We know that you like group work and we think you should have more opportunities to do that and take responsibility for your learning. From what we saw of your reaction when you had these opportunities in lessons, you will enjoy the challenge and your progress will be even better. We would like to see all lessons planned to meet your individual needs and to challenge everyone. Thank you again for making our two days with you so enjoyable. Good luck. Yours sincerely David Simpson HMI