

# Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119799
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	301975
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sonya Williamson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	810
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Vivien McCarron
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Philip Mooney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Melbourne Avenue Fleetwood Lancashire FY7 8AY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 872659
<b>Fax number</b>	01253 772143

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2007
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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 Allen is a smaller than average 11–16 Catholic comprehensive school situated on the Wyre peninsula in the town of Fleetwood. The school serves the eight feeder Catholic primary schools situated in the boroughs of Wyre, Fylde and north Blackpool. The number of students eligible for free school meals is lower than the national figure, though large parts of the catchment are in areas which suffer from significant social and economic deprivation. Very few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and all students have English as their first language. Roughly one fifth of the number on roll has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Cardinal Allen Catholic High School is a good and popular school. Students here achieve outstanding levels of personal development. Their behaviour and social, moral and spiritual development are outstanding. They develop into confident and mature young adults during their time at the school. It is through the combined efforts of the staff and the students that the school has achieved the highest status in Eco awards, is a Fair Trade school and has attractive garden areas that provide space for quiet time as well as opportunities for learning outside the classroom. Students enjoy coming here and feel safe, so their attendance is good. There is full access and excellent support for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result of good teaching overall, which is being further improved through close monitoring of its quality, standards are above national expectations and achievement is good.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides the impetus for continued improvements to be made. He knows the school well. He is building a cohesive team of leaders and managers at all levels. These staff are increasingly well skilled to move departments forward and ensure that achievement is promoted. The school is making increasingly effective use of assessment and tracking data to inform planning, to evaluate the impact of initiatives and to set appropriate targets. However, not all teachers use this data sufficiently well in their lesson planning or when writing comments on students' work. Students are not always sure of what actions to take to raise their standards. Targets for achievement are not as effectively used in Key Stage 3 as in Key Stage 4. Although such academic guidance is not as strong as other aspects, care, guidance and support continue to be a strength of the school as at the time of the last inspection. Students participate in an excellent range of out of classroom activities.

Despite financial constraints the school has made progress over time. For example, the current Year 9 students have just selected from a wide range of options that broadly meet their needs. The curriculum is satisfactory but there has been improvement since the last inspection. It has been made possible by entering into a wide and growing range of partnerships within the community. Partnership planning is a strong factor in helping the school to move forward. However, although there are recent initiatives to consult more widely with parents, a significant number would like additional opportunities for consultation. Students also have much to offer, through their good speaking and listening skills, their acceptance of responsibility and strong social and moral attitudes. They make good contributions to the school council but could make even more effective inputs to a wider range of decisions if they were consulted further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop teachers' use of assessment and tracking data to raise standards further for all groups of students.
- Improve the marking of students' work so that they know what to aim for and how to make the progress needed to achieve their targets.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. The standards attained by students when they enter the school are broadly average. Students make a strong start, build well on their prior attainment and make very good progress in Key Stage 3 in English and good progress in mathematics and science. Boys perform slightly better than girls; overall students attain

above average standards. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other students.

At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2006, GCSE results were above average. This reversed the decline of 2005. In 2006, a significantly higher percentage of students achieved the higher grade results, which included English and mathematics. Nearly all students left with five passes, reflecting the school's aim to be inclusive. Results are above average in many subjects, particularly English and mathematics and also art, drama and information and communication technology (ICT). The school is aware that standards in business studies, food technology and geography are lower and has begun a series of measures to raise standards in these subjects. In 2006, most students achieved well, including those with low prior attainment and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Boys continue to perform slightly better than girls, which is contrary to the national picture.

Evidence from the inspection confirms the steady improvement in achievement. This is because the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is leading to a large majority of students currently achieving well. Expectations of success have been raised among students, their parents and staff. This owes much to the determined and well directed work of the senior leadership team.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Students enjoy coming to school. Their attitudes to learning are excellent. Their attendance is above average. Students feel safe in school. They say there is very little bullying. Inspection evidence suggests that relationships between students and adults and with each other are outstanding. Students' spiritual, moral and social development is also outstanding. They have good opportunities to exercise responsibility. Their cultural development is good but more could be done to provide greater awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain. Students are friendly and welcoming and their behaviour, including in the school's narrow corridors and stairways, and the dining areas, is excellent. Annual exclusion rates tend to be below average. Students know the importance of healthy living and taking regular exercise. From their personal, social, health and citizenship lessons they learn the importance of keeping safe and making safe choices. Their awareness of ecological issues is exceptional and their enthusiasm and hard work have helped the school achieve Green Flag Eco School status on two separate occasions. Students make a good contribution to the community. They undertake a significant amount of extra work to help raise money for local and national charities and good causes, for example, the Catholic Caring Services and breast cancer charities. They are well prepared for the challenges of the workplace and leave school with good basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. The school is developing strategies to further improve the quality of teaching. This is promoting good learning, improving standards and ensuring greater consistency in teaching quality. In general, teachers plan their lessons well and offer their students challenging and stimulating tasks. Students show interest and apply themselves well. They work together in pairs or groups with maturity and responsibility. As a result, their teamwork, confidence and speaking and listening skills are enhanced. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to focus attention, engage students and encourage active

participation. Students enjoy their lessons all the more where there is a good variety of activities delivered at a brisk pace. The chance to be creative, to use initiative and to assess their own work, or that of their peers, adds to the quality of their learning.

Where there are weaknesses in the teaching, learning is less secure. Questioning is uncertain or underused, timing and pace are inconsistent, or activities lack variety. Students only occasionally have the opportunity to be involved in the evaluation of their own or their peers' performance. Where there is a wide range of ability, teachers do not always ensure that the work is suited to students' differing needs. The standard of marking and feedback to students shows inconsistency both within and across subjects.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. However, since the previous inspection there has been good curriculum development to meet the needs of all groups of students. Vocational and accredited courses in a number of areas, including construction, health and social care and business systems, form part of the current Year 9 option choices, alongside a good range of traditional academic subjects. Links with a local college are being developed for students who wish to specialise in agriculture, or horticulture. This provision has come too late for current Key Stage 4 students who would benefit from vocational courses but who currently follow a mainly academic curriculum.

An effective personal, social, health and citizenship programme for all students has been developed which supports students' personal development well. Extra-curricular opportunities are excellent, particularly in sport where participation rates are high. The school is rightly proud of being the first school in the country to become a Fair Trade school and support for the environment is outstanding. There is effective use of ICT to support learning in most subjects but not all students in Key Stage 4 are receiving their entitlement to the National Curriculum in ICT.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good with several outstanding features. The care and support given to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding, as are the partnerships with other bodies which support students who are vulnerable or identified as 'at risk'. The school also provides excellent support internally with clubs and activities to promote greater confidence and self-esteem. Good links with partner institutions ensure students are supported well on entry to the school and when they leave. Child protection procedures are in place and all teaching and non-teaching staff have received training. All safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. The individual education plans for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are drawn up in detail with contributions from all subjects. All teachers have ICT access on a confidential network to maintain records of these students' progress. The tracking of students' progress is robust and shows evidence of significant gains by the majority of students with more severe learning needs. Systems for tracking students' progress in mainstream groups are in place. Teachers are well informed about students' progress, but students and parents are not always aware of current attainment, strategies for improvement and targets. These latter are not consistently recorded in pupil planners or exercise books, nor explained effectively in reports.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and senior leadership has particular strength in setting clear direction to ensure the school continues to raise standards and promote high quality care. The headteacher provides a rationale for change that is securely based on every child matters outcomes. He is successfully empowering other managers in the school through both challenge and support. Whole school development plans are good. This is because the school is largely accurate in its self-evaluation and knows its strengths and weaknesses. Progress with plans is evaluated well. Many middle managers lead their departments successfully and ensure that teachers promote equality of opportunity. Where individual subject department plans are not well focused or desired outcomes not achieved, then senior staff monitor and advise closely. This means that differences in the quality of provision and variations in achievement between subjects are being narrowed.

Governors provide dedicated support to the school but they do not yet challenge sufficiently rigorously. Areas for improvement from the previous report have been largely addressed. This is despite the financial constraints under which the governors have been working and have managed well. Although the pace of curriculum change has been necessarily slow, the governors have invested appropriately in staffing. Recruitment strategies are closely linked to prioritised school development needs. Standards are rising overall. Consequently, the school gives good value for money and shows good capacity to improve.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

8 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood, FY7 8AY

We really enjoyed our inspection of your school because you made us feel so welcome and were keen to talk to us at every opportunity. The school has really helped to develop your confidence. You explain your opinions clearly. We also enjoyed your school environment with its attractive garden areas which you have worked enthusiastically to develop with the help of your teachers.

Cardinal Allen is a good school which supports you to achieve results that are above the average for the country. Teachers present you with a wide range of activities that you appear to enjoy, particularly when you are actively involved such as with evaluating each other's work. You develop positive relationships with each other and with your teachers. All these things mean that you attend well, your behaviour is excellent and you make full use of the excellent range of activities available outside school hours. We think the things you see changing in your school are good developments. The school tracks your progress to make sure you do as well as you should. The headteacher and senior teachers are helping to make sure that all subject departments are as good as the best. The new options that have been available to those of you in Year 9 give you both traditional and work-based course opportunities that will meet your needs when you leave school.

To improve things further, we have asked the teachers to make more use of the information they have about how well you are doing when they plan their lessons. When they mark your work we have asked them to let you know what to aim for and how to make the progress needed to reach your targets. We think this would help you to achieve even higher standards. You will need to read their comments carefully and continue to try as hard as you can, especially if the work is challenging.

We wish you a happy and successful future.

Sonya Williamson HMI

Lead inspector