

# Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Community College

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103743
<b>Local Authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	323892
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Kempton 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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1234
Sixth form	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Parnell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Buchanan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	Sandpits Lane Keresley Coventry CV6 2FR
<b>Telephone number</b>	02476 332382
<b>Fax number</b>	02476 335626

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to administration error

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Cardinal Newman is located on the outskirts of Coventry. It draws its students from one third of the city from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and is oversubscribed year on year. The school became a specialist arts college in September 2008 and aspires to establish creativity across the curriculum. The sixth form is popular and offers a wide range of post-16 courses. It works in close partnership with The Coventry North West Federation and other external partners. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. There are fewer students with a statement of special educational need than found nationally. Almost all the students are White British and the proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language are below those of most schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Cardinal Newman is a good school, described by a local priest as 'a generous community, committed to the development of each and every student'. The school has demonstrated sustained improvement since its last inspection, when it was judged satisfactory. Standards have risen year on year; they are above average in the sixth form, especially at A2 level, and unvalidated data for 2008 indicate that attainment at Key Stage 4 will be the highest ever achieved.

Students achieve well. Their progress varies between subjects but is good in the majority, notably in art, drama and English, the school's specialist subjects. However, due to staffing difficulties over the last few years, students in mathematics have only made satisfactory progress in the main school and this has impacted on the overall percentage of five A\* to C grades at GCSE. Recent appointments have stabilised the mathematics department, although this has not yet led to raised standards and there are still some teaching inconsistencies in mathematics in the main school.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. Teachers plan lessons with a good variety of stimulating activities and use questioning strategies well to extend students' learning. However, the marking of students' work is inconsistent across the school because each department is responsible for its own marking system, and this confuses some students. The curriculum is good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. The school has worked hard to ensure that all students have an appropriate curriculum to suit their ability. Its success has ensured that more and more students stay on to the sixth form, where they can extend their learning through appropriate courses either at the school or through the very successful local federation of schools. It is too early to measure the impact of the specialist subjects on raising whole school attainment.

The personal development and well-being of students are good. They know what constitutes a healthy diet and how to lead an active lifestyle. Over half the students take part in one of the many after-school clubs, which range from competitive sport to cheerleading. They all tangibly enjoy their education and this is reflected in their good behaviour and satisfactory attendance, both areas that the school has successfully improved since the last inspection. Students make a positive contribution to the community through their impressive fund-raising for international charities and those within the local community. They give concerts to the local senior citizens, hospitals and primary schools. Many students volunteer to help with community activities such as sporting events, and help to run youth groups. Students are very supportive of each other's gifts and talents, as seen when a Year 9 girl sang in front of her year group in assembly and received enthusiastic applause. As such, the school is a cohesive community. Students are well cared for and supported, especially pastorally. The change to a new electronic system of academic tracking is a positive move.

None of this improvement can take place without strong leadership and management at all levels. The good leadership of the headteacher has driven the improvement agenda. A new senior leadership team is now in place and has good capacity to further improve standards. There are now high aspirations and strong ambitions to further raise achievement. However, strategic planning, whilst commendably shared with a wide range of parties including parents, lacks sufficient measurable milestones or sufficiently challenging targets so that all can identify the progress made.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Overall, students make good progress and attain above average standards at A2 and AS levels and on intermediate courses. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding and analysis of performance since the last inspection has resulted in changes to provision, leading to sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, which are now also outstanding. There are well established monitoring processes that inform development priorities, resulting in an excellent capacity to improve. Teachers have good subject knowledge and clear, high expectations of students, who respond positively to this challenge. Relationships between staff and students are based on mutual respect and this enhances students' commitment to their learning. There is an impressive variety of subject options available through the links with the local federation of schools. Students' personal development is outstanding too. They develop a strong awareness of their contribution to society through their involvement in charity work, for example the 'Shoe Box' appeal. Care, guidance and support for learners are also outstanding, with regular academic counselling in all subject areas contributing to the good progress they make. Students report that they are very pleased with the guidance they receive from their teachers and the support the school offers them to make informed decisions about their futures.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the pace of improvement in mathematics in the main school by reducing teaching inconsistencies.
- Improve the effectiveness of strategic planning to include more measurable milestones and challenging targets.
- Build on best practice to devise a more coherent and consistent marking policy across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are improving year on year. Students enter the school with broadly average standards. They make good progress in the majority of subjects, although weaker progress in mathematics depresses the overall standards reached at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 to just above average. The specialist school subjects do especially well, and this is also true for the careful choice of appropriate courses for individual students, for example in science, where the vocational courses have increased motivation and attainment. In the past, there have been differences between the performance of girls and boys in the main school. The school has tackled this issue through a range of different projects such as single gender teaching and the Breakthrough project for boys. The gap is now reducing.

Increasing numbers of students choose to stay on in the sixth form, where the rate of progress increases and students attain standards that are above the national average. Attainment in A2 examinations is better than at AS. This is due to the large number of students entered for general studies. Whilst this depresses the overall AS results, it provides all Year 12 students with a broad and valuable curriculum. Individual subjects perform well at both AS and A2.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Students enjoy coming to school and attendance continues to improve. Strategies to improve behaviour have been effective and students now behave well in and out of lessons. One parent commented, 'The discipline in the school has improved dramatically. Children now want to succeed in whatever career or talent they choose to pursue.' Students are keen to learn, work well together and show mutual respect. Very occasional bullying and isolated racial incidents have occurred in the past, but students confirm that staff deal with these incidents efficiently and they are resolved quickly, ensuring that students feel safe and secure.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for the students' moral, social and cultural development. A very wide range of trips and other experiences broaden students' cultural awareness. Links with schools in Africa promote a better understanding and awareness of social diversity and multiculturalism on an international scale. However, there are fewer opportunities at a local level. Spiritual awareness is a strength of the school and is strongly supported by the lay chaplain, who works closely with students in a range of roles, such as organising anti-bullying week. Students know how to stay fit and well through active participation in a wide range of sports and healthy eating, although not all choose to do so.

There are many opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to both the school and local community, notably as student councillors and bully buddies. The school council is a strength of the school and acts as a catalyst for improvement and change. For example, the mobile phone policy was produced by the councillors in consultation with their peers. Students work very hard for various charities, often on their own initiative and raise large amounts of money. In the last year, they raised over £5,000.

Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being, particularly by developing valuable personal skills and good examination results, and receiving timely advice on future options.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection through the activities of the school improvement group and the substantial development of middle leader capability, and is particularly good in the sixth form. There are now clear and effective processes for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Teachers and support staff form good relationships with students, who are confident and keen to learn.

During the inspection, there was clear evidence of good progress in lessons. In the most effective, teachers take good account of the range of abilities in the class and provide activities that are stimulating and well matched to students' needs. For example, in a geography lesson students very effectively supported each other through carefully organised group work. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and response, so that nearly all students are attentive and do their best. Lessons move at a brisk pace and are well organised. Many teachers use probing questioning effectively to prompt deeper thinking and understanding from students. For example, in an English AS level lesson, the teacher skillfully developed the students' understanding about spoken texts. However, in mathematics lessons, some teachers do not

manage students as effectively and, as a result, disruptive behaviour slows the pace of learning and has depressed recent test results. While teachers use a good range of systems for measuring and tracking students' progress, their use of marking is inconsistent across the school, leading to some confusion for students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other students in class through targeted support.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is inclusive in nature and courses and programmes are designed to cater for all students, including those who benefit from some off-site provision at local colleges. In Year 7, the school has just introduced a themed cross-curricular approach to learning. Emphasis is placed on acquiring skills, for example in collaborative work and independent enquiry. It is too early to judge the impact of this new initiative. The school has strong partnerships with outside agencies. Links with Warwick University for able and gifted students in further mathematics promote learning and raise aspirations. The partnership with the local federation ensures there is a wide range of pathways which are relevant to individuals. The curriculum in the sixth form, where even more opportunities are available for individual students to follow appropriate courses, is outstanding.

Curricular guidance is strong and students have good support to ensure they choose the right courses; this is a particular feature in the transition from Year 11 to the sixth form. A good range of enrichment activities such as 'Learning to Succeed' enhance the curriculum and raise students' aspirations. There is a good variety of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended at lunchtime and after school. Students are regularly consulted about changes that could be made to the curriculum, and this is taken into consideration when the curriculum is reviewed.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form, where students are very well supported through careful marking of work and information about university applications and careers. The Catholic ethos of the school ensures that pupils are guided through daily acts of worship, tutorials and personal development lessons towards becoming healthy, cooperative members of a global community. A strength of the whole school is its support for vulnerable students and its re-engagement of individuals who have been excluded or not attending. The special needs and inclusion departments liaise with feeder primary schools, staff, students, parents and outside agencies to support vulnerable students well. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and health and safety issues are carefully managed.

The quality of marking and assessment varies both across and between departments, so students' progress is not always monitored effectively. As a result, academic tracking is currently satisfactory. Where teachers mark regularly and guide students well, they can reach challenging targets. However, inconsistencies here and in the way work is tailored for different ability groups mean that not all students are sufficiently guided or challenged and not all of them understand their targets. New and efficient tracking systems and intervention strategies are now in place in the school, but have not had time to consistently embed.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness. The headteacher is very well supported by an impressive senior leadership team who are now poised to improve standards in the school at an even quicker pace. Middle managers are also good, accountable and take full responsibility for the performance of their subject through the regular cycle of examination analysis, departmental review and development planning. The school development plan is shared with them, the governors and the parents and discussed frequently. It is also available on the school's website. However, it does not identify enough measurable milestones or sufficiently challenging targets to be able to gauge its impact and is therefore not as effective as it could be in driving up standards with alacrity.

Governance is good. The governors are regular visitors in school, support its work well and hold the school appropriately to account for the standards achieved.

The school's partnerships with others to promote students' well-being are outstanding. Outside professionals involved with the school are very positive about Cardinal Newman and speak warmly of the welcome they receive and the dedication of the teaching staff to work with them with new initiatives. One commented, 'It is a very collaborative and open school.' Parents too feel well informed about what is happening in school through the regular newsletters and electronic communications. They appreciate the wide range of opportunities available for their children and the caring Catholic ethos and principles of the school. One commented, 'The school enthuses children, who are encouraged to succeed.'



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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>	<b>16-19</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	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

**Achievement and standards**

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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?</b>	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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

26 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Coventry CV6 2FR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school in September. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. I thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what the school could do to improve further.

You and your parents are all very proud to say that you attend Cardinal Newman and you obviously enjoy school. We were impressed with your behaviour in lessons and around the school and how willing you were to share your views with us. Your school has improved since the last inspection and we now judge it to be good. The teachers work hard for you and prepare lessons with lots of activities to help you learn. We were impressed with the questioning strategies they used to help you understand your work. We found the sixth form to be outstanding. More and more of you are choosing to stay on and are succeeding well on the wide range of courses that are offered. The school works hard to help you choose the right courses and those of you who go for a course at another college are really enjoying that too.

We think that the school works well together as a community to help you grow into confident, articulate young adults, ready to take your place in the world. You look out for each other and many of you get involved in volunteering and charity work. The amount of money you raise each year is very impressive. Other adults in the school work hard for you too, from the welcoming reception staff to those who come in from outside agencies to give you other experiences.

In order to improve further, I have suggested that your headteacher and senior staff do the following things.

- Improve the teaching in the mathematics department.
- Set short-term targets or 'milestones' in the school plan to measure improvement.
- Devise a whole school marking policy so that all teachers mark your books in the same way.

With best wishes

Clive Kempton Her Majesty's Inspector