

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103539
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336103
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Mark Phillips 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 of pupils on the school roll	604
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John McCarthy
Headteacher	Mr Martin Jones
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. A fourth additional inspector was on-site for the first morning of the inspection, scrutinising the school's arrangements for safeguarding students.

The inspectors observed 30 lessons, attended an assembly, and visited the Emmaus Centre. Three of the lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and two senior leaders. Inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders, and with the chair of governors. They also met with panels of students from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents including achievement data and the school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and teachers' lesson plans. They also considered records on behaviour, exclusions and attendance, racist incidents and bullying, as well as the school's strategies for promoting, monitoring and evaluating equality of opportunity and community cohesion. In addition to the survey of parents' views, to which 144 replies were received, a sample of 106 students completed a written questionnaire and a staff survey was also conducted. The headteacher helped HMI to plan aspects of the inspection and accepted HMI's invitation to observe inspection team meetings, including the final meeting where judgements were discussed and made.

- The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following issues.
- How effectively do teachers plan and teach lessons that respond to students' different needs and abilities, and that lead to their good progress?
- What part has the curriculum played in improving outcomes for students since the last inspection?
- How often, and why, are students excluded from school? What other strategies does the school use for dealing with inappropriate behaviour?
- In response to the last inspection, how well has the school developed its strategies for school improvement planning?
- How well-managed and how effective are the college's strategies for promoting community cohesion?

Information about the school

Cardinal Wiseman is a smaller-than-average school. It has been a specialist technology college since September 2003. Just under half of all students are Roman Catholic, and around a further quarter describe themselves as Christian. A separate denominational inspection, under Section 48 of the Education Act, was carried out at the same time as this inspection.

The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly higher than average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is high, reflecting some of the challenging circumstances faced in the school's immediate community.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College provides a satisfactory standard of education and a good standard of care. The trend of improvement reported in the last inspection has been consolidated, as seen by further progress in key areas of provision such as the curriculum and the care, guidance, and support offered to students, which are now both judged good. Teaching is satisfactory and there are some notable examples of good practice.

Students' learning is satisfactory, with a number of good aspects. Particularly strong areas are English and the college's specialism, design technology. In these subjects, students make good progress to achieve average standards. In other subjects, however, their progress is more limited and standards are below average. Observations of students' work and learning during the inspection confirmed that students' are making satisfactory progress in their learning overall, given their prior attainment.

Students' behaviour is satisfactory and their attendance is broadly average. Inspectors recognise that the school has had to make good efforts to achieve these judgements, given some challenging circumstances. Many students were seen to be behaving appropriately in lessons and around the school during the inspection. However, records show that there remain a relatively high number who sometimes behave inappropriately and require temporary exclusion. Similarly, while attendance has improved since September 2009, there remain a number of students who are persistently absent. The school has worked hard, in partnership with parents and other agencies, to develop further its systems for supporting vulnerable students and encouraging their better behaviour and attendance, but there remains more to be done to improve both these outcomes.

The headteacher and his two deputies are a well-established, strong team that is supported by some able assistant headteachers and middle managers. They have a clear vision for the school. They also promote a good ambition for continuing improvement and, above all, a desire to do the best for and raise the aspirations of every student. Since the last inspection, several key areas have improved from satisfactory to good. Dialogue during the inspection showed that senior leaders and middle managers have a realistic understanding of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. For these reasons, inspectors are confident in the school's good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise standards achieved by students, including:

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- in all subjects, including mathematics, bringing standards broadly in line with the national average
- improving the proportion of A and A* grades attained at GCSE by the most-able students.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that all lessons are planned with a greater emphasis on how students will develop their learning and understanding, rather than predominantly on the activities that the teacher is to lead.
- Continue to improve students' behaviour and attendance by:
 - reducing instances of inappropriate behaviour and making even greater use of in-school seclusion, so that the numbers of fixed-term exclusions fall further to be at least in line with national averages
 - decreasing the numbers of students who are persistently absent to below 4% of the school population, and focussing particularly on the attendance of students in Key Stage 4.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs or equivalent qualifications has risen since the last inspection and was broadly average in 2008 and 2009. The number attaining five good GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics was below average in these years, but not significantly so. As was reported in the 2009 Ofsted survey inspection, students make good progress in English. Good numbers of students gain two GCSE passes at grade C or above in a science subject, although the large majority achieve this through the vocational applied science course rather than the academic option. While there are clear improvements with the current Year 11 students, standards in mathematics have remained low for three years and in 2009 students made significantly less progress in mathematics than they should have done. Similarly, students made limited progress in geography and religious studies in 2009, and standards in history were too low. The proportion of students gaining GCSE passes at the highest grades of A and A* is low, compared with national figures. The school recognises that more can be done to promote good achievement for the most-able students. Nevertheless, observations made during the inspection confirmed that current students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making satisfactory progress overall across the school.

Students respond well towards the school's strategies for promoting healthy lifestyles. A good number participate in sporting and artistic activities, and they understand what they need to do to eat and drink healthily. During the inspection, students demonstrated polite, sensible and co-operative behaviour, and their compliance with the school's expectations was very positive. However, records of exclusion and other sanctions show that this is not always the case. While students and inspectors recognise that the school

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has effective strategies in place to deal firmly with incidents when they occur, inappropriate behaviour by a small minority worries some younger members of the school. The school's leaders are absolutely correct to take a strong line on behaviour; as a result of some effective intervention strategies, there have been fewer incidents of one-off or repeat exclusion this year than in 2008-9. It is very positive that there are few cases of racist behaviour. Nevertheless, there are still too many occasions when students present challenging attitudes to judge behaviour any better than satisfactory overall.

Similarly, whilst attendance in 2009-2010 has improved significantly from the previous three years, this improvement is not yet consistent as shown by the varied attendance across year groups during the inspection, with noticeably more absence in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. There is still a significant group of students who are persistently absent. Consequently, while students make good progress in developing some of the important skills that they will need in later life, such as literacy, preparation for their future employment or education is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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All teaching was observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, and there were a number of particularly good examples of teachers skilfully drawing the best out of their students. For example: in an all-boys English lesson the teacher used a combination of open-ended questioning, together with a firm insistence on students using correct and complex terminology, to build their understanding of relationships and character in 'Romeo and Juliet'. All lessons are planned using a common framework that gives both teachers and students clear structures and routines. However in the majority of lessons, students make satisfactory rather than good progress because planning focuses on the activities to be completed rather than the learning and understanding that the students should demonstrate. The school's leadership has worked hard to secure consistency in lesson planning and ensure that inadequate teaching is rare. Senior leaders recognise that the next step is to move the emphasis to the effectiveness and enhancement of student learning, and that this may require a more flexible and creative teaching approach that responds more to students' needs, including those who are most able.

The curriculum provides a good balance of academic and vocational options. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which are enjoyed and well-attended. The school has been proactive in embracing a varied range of qualifications, including the academic and the vocational-applied science GCSE courses and the pilot double-English GCSE. These have contributed to improvements in the proportion of students gaining the equivalent of five good passes at GCSE. In some subjects, classes from Year 9 onwards are taught in single-gender groups, and this arrangement is proving to have a positive impact on behaviour and achievement. Overall, there is good provision for literacy, and aspects of personal and social education, together with citizenship, are brought together well in the 'Wiseman curriculum'. Alternative, personalised curriculum programmes are offered when appropriate. This includes the work of the 'Emmaus Centre', where students experiencing behavioural difficulties are able to develop their social and study skills in smaller classes for a three-week period. Since this centre opened in September 2009, it has had success in preventing some students from being repeatedly excluded from school. Other good aspects of the guidance and support offered to students include good links with feeder primary schools, the Catholic sixth forms, and other schools in the Oscott Extended Schools cluster. There are also good partnerships with other agencies, particularly to support the most vulnerable students and their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The school provides satisfactory value for money. The effectiveness of school development planning, a key issue at the last inspection, has improved. All subject areas have detailed self-evaluations and development plans which feed into whole-school strategies and most middle leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their departments. Inspectors enjoyed professional dialogue with senior leaders and middle managers during the inspection, including in joint lesson observations. The school has recently undertaken a thorough review of its procedures for safeguarding students. Inspectors found that there are robust procedures in place for checking adults working at the school, and the school site and buildings are well-secured. Partnerships with parents are positive, and there are good channels of communication including the up-to-date, informative e-portal and the weekly newsletter. Governors have adopted suitable policies for promoting equalities and the school's contribution to community cohesion, although some aspects of these are only recently in place and have yet to be evaluated fully. Therefore, while governors have a good understanding of the school's work and context, and the school works hard to engage with its local community, these aspects are judged satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

While inspectors were pleased to receive responses from the parents and carers of

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nearly one in every four students, it was unfortunate that two different questionnaires were sent home for parents and carers to complete. One questionnaire contained all of the statements shown in the grid below; the other, which was completed by the majority, contained just seven questions, which were worded slightly differently. Inspectors and administrative staff combined these responses as far as it was possible and where there was a clear match between the questions. However, as can be seen from the grid, for some questions it was not possible to gauge the views of all parents fully. Nevertheless inspectors noted parents and carers' general satisfaction with the schools' work, although they also noted the concerns that a small minority raised regarding students' safety and behaviour. While inspectors agree that the behaviour of some students could be improved further, and recognise that this behaviour occasionally worries younger students, they also found that the school has robust procedures for safeguarding and that staff make good efforts to assure students' well-being.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 604 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	38	72	51	11	8	4	3
The school keeps my child safe	63	45	64	45	10	7	4	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	13	4	3	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	38	81	57	4	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	12	9	10	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	8	9	6	2	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	8	10	7	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	8	10	7	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	8	10	7	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	28	71	50	16	11	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	31	81	57	4	4	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	55	39	77	55	2	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	9	7	5	2	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 April 2010

Dear Students,

Inspection of Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College, West Midlands, B44 9SR

I am writing to let you know the results of the inspection visit that we made to your school at the end of April. The school has been judged satisfactory overall because, amongst other things, you make satisfactory progress in your studies, and your behaviour and attendance is also satisfactory. We have also judged that the school has good capacity for making further improvements.

We recognise that your teachers work hard to provide you with a good curriculum and a good standard of care. We were very pleased that you are developing good attitudes towards healthy living. The school has good systems in place for keeping you safe, although we also know that some of you do not always feel comfortable because of other students' behaviour. Mr Jones and his team are taking a firm line on behaviour, quite rightly. However, there is more to be done. There are still too many occasions when poor behaviour leads to exclusion from school. You can play your part by ensuring that everyone's behaviour is as good, all the time, as the behaviour that we saw in lessons during the inspection. You can also help by ensuring that you only miss school when it is absolutely necessary. There are still too many of you absent too often without good reason.

Make no mistake about it - consistently good behaviour and attendance at school are essential for success in learning. These are things that employers and colleges value very highly because they give you the best possible chances in your future lives, which you deserve.

Thank you for the part that you played in this inspection and thanks, too, to your parents for the good support that they give you and the school as you continue your studies.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips

Her Majesty's Inspector

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