

# Cardinal Newman Catholic High School

Bridgewater Avenue, Latchford, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 1RX

<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. They make good progress in the majority of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and gaps between their attainment and that of others are closing. In English in 2015 disadvantaged pupils achieved even better than others in the school and nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported so that they make good progress from their starting points.
- The majority of teaching is good. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and most prepare work which motivates and engages pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school because they feel safe and are confident that teachers care about them and will do their best to help them.
- Behaviour around school and in lessons is typically good. Pupils are polite, wear their school uniform with pride and respond quickly to teachers' instructions.
- The headteacher and all leaders are relentless in their determination to make the school as effective as it can possibly be. They have an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development, and have used this information to drive improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Since the previous inspection, the governors have taken significant steps to increase their effectiveness. They now have a good understanding of how well the school is doing, and have the skills and knowledge to hold senior leaders to account. They make an effective contribution to improving the quality of the school's work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not as rapid in Years 7 to 9 as it is in Years 10 and 11. Achievement in humanities is not yet good.
- Not all teachers provide pupils with enough challenge and support in lessons.
- In some subjects pupils do not write as well as they do in English.
- Leaders do not make use of the full range of information available to them when judging the quality of teaching. Their evaluation of some teaching is slightly overgenerous.
- Although absence is reducing overall, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as high as others.

## Full report

- Improve progress, particularly at Key Stage 3 and in humanities, by:
  - ensuring that all targets set for pupils provide a high level of stretch and challenge.
  
- Share best practice in teaching so that all teachers prepare lessons:
  - offering a good level of challenge and the right level of support for learning
  - providing more occasions for pupils to develop their writing and insisting on accurate writing structure, including correct use of paragraphs and spellings.
  
- Improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils by:
  - analysing attendance data more closely so that identified pupils are targeted and regularly checking that the steps taken are reducing absence.
  
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
  - monitoring the quality of teaching and assessment more rigorously and accurately.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and governors consider a wide range of detailed information to check how well the school is doing. As a result, they have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and use this to drive improvements. Consequently, achievement and the quality of teaching have improved since the last inspection.
- Processes for teachers' performance management are robust and the system is used effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils they teach. Pay increases are linked to performance. Outcomes are used to provide teachers with training and support to enable them to develop their practice. All teachers report that they feel well supported by this, and that morale within the school is good.
- Senior leaders combine information about pupils' progress, samples of their work, lesson observations and short visits to lessons to make judgements about the quality of teaching. However, outcomes of the latter are not recorded, so leaders rely more on what they see in planned lesson observations to make judgements about the quality of teaching. Sometimes this means that judgements about individual teachers or subjects are slightly too generous.
- Middle leaders, led by the very-able deputy headteacher, closely track the achievement of pupils currently in the school. They know the pupils well, and where any are underachieving, swift actions are put in place to provide them with extra support. This enables the majority of the pupils to achieve well. However, departments within the school have a certain amount of freedom in the targets that they set for individual pupils. This means that in some cases, targets for individual pupils are not always challenging enough.
- Where subjects, such as science, have underperformed, robust action plans are put in place and closely monitored to check that they are working. Senior leaders meet middle leaders regularly and challenge and hold them to account for progress in their subjects and set targets for improvement. This has led to improvements in teaching and achievement in a number of subjects but particularly in science in all years.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of the full range of pupils, including the right balance of academic and vocational subjects. Pupils study a broad range of subjects, a number of which are supported by extra-curricular study clubs. Pupils' learning is further enriched by a wide range of additional activities including reading and chess clubs in the library, visits – to theatre productions for example, music and sporting fixtures. Careers education and guidance is strong and practically all pupils go on to education, employment or training. Opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are promoted strongly through personal, social, health and economics, citizenship and religious education lessons. These contribute to pupils being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Promotion of equalities is a strength of the school. Pupils are well cared for so that any barriers to success are removed. Year 7 catch-up funding and pupil premium funding are well targeted to ensure that disadvantaged pupils, and those who started school with below-average attainment, achieve well. In addition, pupils say that all pupils are welcomed into the school and valued equally, and that prejudice of any sort is not tolerated. Leaders value the local authority's support and use it to validate the accuracy of their judgements, as well as as a means of brokering support for professional development with other schools.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Since the previous inspection governors have taken robust steps to address the areas of weakness identified in their practice. All governors have been newly recruited for the skills and experience which they can bring to the school; the governing body is now knowledgeable and supportive. Members have identified their own training needs and have made sure that they understand the information they receive, as well as taking part in much of the safeguarding training which is offered to staff.
  - Governors take steps to ensure that they have first-hand evidence of the work of the school rather than relying on the headteacher for information. Members of the governing body therefore meet on a regular basis with key senior and middle leaders to discuss their work and progress with them. This is then fed back to other governors, so that all have a shared understanding. Governors have also identified key personnel, such as the heads of English and mathematics, to make presentations to them at governing body meetings so that they can check on progress.
  - Governors now have an accurate understanding of how well the school is performing and what needs to be improved. It is evident from minutes of meetings that they use this information to ask senior leaders pertinent and challenging questions. They check that performance management targets are

realistic but challenging and ensure that there is a clear link between performance and pay progression. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and check that it is making a positive difference, so that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved. They are not yet as knowledgeable as they should be about the effectiveness of Year 7 catch-up funding.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All teachers and governors have received safeguarding training. Teachers have also recently undertaken 'Prevent' training and some governors have too. Staff and governors are all aware of the risks and signs of extremism and know how to protect pupils. Child protection processes are secure and include links with a wide range of relevant agencies.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good; the majority of pupils and groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, so pupils feel well supported in their work, are confident to take part in lessons and want to do their best.
- Teachers are very enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and know what pupils need to learn in order to be successful. Most teachers use effective strategies to check how well pupils are learning in lessons and then adjust their teaching to meet their needs. Following the school's policy, all teachers mark work regularly and give pupils indications of what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching is highly effective in English. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that pupils are well supported and have built up the skills and knowledge that they need to complete extended pieces of writing successfully. Pupils read frequently and teachers use texts creatively to capture pupils' interest and to encourage them to write for a range of purposes. Year 9 pupils for example, were using Macbeth as a stimulus for a piece of writing in the style of the 'Horrible Histories'. Discussions challenge pupils' thinking well and help them to consolidate their understanding.
- Pupils often read throughout the school day and in tutor time. However, apart from in English, a few teachers in some subjects do not always give pupils scope to develop their written work further in other subjects. For example, teachers do not always insist on the correct spellings of subject-specific vocabulary.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability achieve well because they are well supported in lessons. In a PE lesson, for example, pupils were given time and encouragement to develop their fine motor skills and then to apply their new skills by taking part in a game. Skilled teaching assistants provide effective support to make sure that the pupils they work with in lessons make good progress.
- In most subjects teachers have high expectations and use questions well to target pupils and to encourage them to think. However, occasionally, especially at Key Stage 3, teachers set work that is too easy for the most-able pupils so they finish it too quickly and their learning is not deepened. They do not spend enough time working on the types of questions or problems which will enable them to reach the highest grades because they are expected to work on too many easy questions first. In other cases, some pupils find work too hard and do not know how to start.
- A small minority of teachers do not follow the school's marking and assessment policy well enough. They do not always provide pupils with precise enough guidance about what they need to do to improve their work, or give them time to absorb what they have written.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are resolved to support vulnerable pupils and those with complex needs and work with a wide range of agencies to be sure that these pupils are enabled to be as successful as possible. Where pupils attend alternative provision, leaders check closely on their safety and attendance, as well as ensuring that the provision fully meets their needs. Pupils are unanimous in feeling confident that school keeps them safe and teaches them to keep themselves safe. They say that despite bullying and incidents of poor behaviour occurring occasionally, staff deal with them quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the different forms which bullying may take and know how to protect themselves from, for example, cyber bullying. The school council has been very proactive and has made their own anti-bullying film to be shared with other pupils in the school.

- Pupils report that the school community is welcoming and harmonious and that all people are valued regardless of gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. They say that there is no tolerance at all of any prejudice-based behaviour. The curriculum ensures that they have a good understanding of different faiths and lifestyles, and therefore that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils typically conduct themselves well both in and out of lessons and respond very quickly when told what to do. For example, they were told not to use a particular area of the school during breaks and lunchtime and, without exception, they all cooperated without teachers needing to be on hand to remind them to do so.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming. They were all very approachable and willing to talk to inspectors about their school and all talked about it with pride. They are also proud of their appearance and all of them look very smart in their school uniforms. In addition, the vast majority take pride in their work, taking care to do their best and to present it as neatly as possible.
- Attendance is improving because pupils enjoy coming to school. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as good as that of other pupils. Leaders collect a wide range of information about attendance, but do not always analyse it well enough to know exactly which pupils need to be targeted and supported.
- In a small minority of lessons when the work set does not meet the needs of the pupils well enough, some drift off, lose concentration and their attitudes to learning are not as good as they should be.

### Outcomes for pupils

### are good

- In 2015 the proportion of pupils who attained five good GCSEs including English and mathematics was above average. This represented good progress from pupils' average starting points on entry to the school.
- The school's tracking data shows that pupils currently in Key Stage 4 are typically making good progress in most subjects and that standards are on track to remain above average. Inspectors confirmed this by sampling pupils' work in Years 10 and 11.
- In 2015 disadvantaged pupils achieved extremely well in English. The proportion of these pupils who made expected and better than expected progress was higher than other pupils both in the school and nationally. As a result, the school's attainment gap in English closed completely, and the gap with other pupils nationally narrowed to half a grade.
- In mathematics, though the gap is closing, it is happening more slowly than in English. In 2015 disadvantaged pupils in mathematics attained two thirds of a grade lower than other pupils nationally and half a grade below other pupils in school. However, a higher proportion of current disadvantaged pupils are making expected and better progress than in 2015. As a result of the effective use of pupil premium funding, the school's data for current pupils shows that the gap is continuing to close across the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because of the good support that they receive. Careful use of Year 7 catch-up funding ensures that pupils who start school with below-average standards in English and mathematics are helped to develop the skills they need to access the curriculum and to make good progress in most subjects.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress, but not enough achieve the highest GCSE grades. This is because teachers, in all subjects, do not consistently provide them with work which really challenges them and encourages them to think deeply.
- As a result of high expectations pupils achieve very well in English. Work in their books indicates that they can write clearly, convincingly and in detail for a range of different purposes. They often read in English lessons, and teachers make very effective use of texts as a stimulus to encourage pupils to write. Reading is strengthened through the well-resourced and organised library and effective reading programmes in Years 7 and 8 generate rapid increases in pupils' reading ages. However, pupils do not apply and develop their literacy skills as well in other subjects as they do in English. This is because some teachers do not provide enough focused support for the development of writing in their subjects. They do not insist that pupils take enough care with the accuracy of their writing or structure it properly, for example by using paragraphs and correct punctuation. They do not expect pupils to check that what they have written is

clear and makes sense.

- Progress in mathematics has been slower than in English but is improving rapidly, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils are able to follow mathematical processes but they do not develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts often enough, for example by using their mathematical skills to investigate or to solve real-life problems in mathematics lessons or in other subjects, such as science.
- In recent years pupils have not achieved as well in science as they have in other subjects. However, for current pupils, work seen in lessons and in books indicates that progress is accelerating. This is because leaders have redesigned the Key Stage 3 science curriculum to be sure it gives them the skills they need to succeed at GCSE. Progress in humanities is also slower than in other subjects. Leaders have taken the right steps to address this but have been hindered by being unable to recruit specialist humanities teachers.
- Although most pupils make good progress in the majority of subjects over time, their progress is not yet as rapid at Key Stage 3 as it is at Key Stage 4. This is because teachers do not always give the most-able pupils in Years 7 to 9 enough challenging work or support lower attainers who struggle.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111456
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002189

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	767
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev. Peter Montgomery
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Warburton
<b>Telephone number</b>	01925 635556
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cardinal-newman.org.uk">www.cardinal-newman.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:jwa@cardinal-newman.co.uk">jwa@cardinal-newman.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3–4 December 2013

## Information about this school

- Cardinal Newman Catholic High School is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British, and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- Some Year 7 pupils receive catch-up funding if they did not reach the expected levels in English or mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- Since the previous inspection, the hard federation with St Gregory's Catholic High School has been dissolved. The head of school has since become the headteacher and a new governing body has been established.
- A very small number of pupils attend part-time alternative provision at New Horizons, a pupil referral unit, or are home tutored.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 part lessons. Some of these lessons were observed jointly with two different leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work in books were scrutinised in lessons. In addition, jointly with the headteacher, inspectors reviewed work in science, humanities and mathematics books from both key stages.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including minutes of meetings, action plans, examples of anonymised performance management targets and records of leaders' monitoring activities.
- Inspectors spoke formally with senior and middle leaders, as well as with the chair of governors and seven other governors, a cross-section of different teachers and a representative from the local authority. They also held formal meetings with a number of groups of pupils as well as talking to them informally at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took into account 22 responses to a staff questionnaire and 37 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Christine Birchall, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Kenyon	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Ashley	Ofsted Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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