

Inspection Report

Report on the inspection of denominational education under
Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Cardinal Newman School
The Upper Drive
Hove
BN36ND

Chair of Governors	Mr Tad Matus
Headteacher	Mr Peter Evans OBE
Inspectors	Dr William J Dickson SDB Mr Matthew Dell

Inspection dates 4th Dec 2007

*(office will insert diocesan details here prior to
publication)

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Brighton Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by Brighton and Hove LA. The principal parishes which the school serves are Sacred Heart, St John the Baptist, St Peter's, St Teresa's, St Joseph's. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 67%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 8% in Key Stage 3, 8% in Key Stage 4 and 4% in the Sixth Form, which is below the 10% asked for by the Bishops' Curriculum Directory.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 18 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 2093. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals is around average. A higher-than-average proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups and speak languages other than English, although most are fluent in English. A smaller-than-average proportion of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

Cardinal Newman is an outstanding Catholic school.

Community is a major value in the school and students are encouraged to grow from their sense of safety, security and belonging to an active commitment to changing the world. Students feel secure and know that they are listened to and that problems such as bullying will be dealt with. Pastoral care and support, which is outstanding, is available to all students through the tutors and year teachers and for less able students through Learning Support and the homework club. After school clubs, sports and music flourish in the school emphasising its commitment to being an extended and inclusive community. Pupils from different racial, religious and national backgrounds feel welcome. There is a well developed Mission Statement that makes clear the school's commitment to working in partnership with home and parish to promote God's Kingdom and that is promoting significant Gospel values and attitudes, including an awareness of the students' journey of faith.

The school is committed to developing its life of prayer through an outstanding chaplaincy which works with a wide variety of students and staff on various activities, including retreats, missions and various small groups.

The quality of the work of the school's inspiring Headteacher and his leadership team in raising achievement throughout the school and promoting

its Catholic ethos gives solid ground for believing that even more progress can be made in further developing its' effectiveness as a Catholic school. Since the last inspection,

- Religious symbols are now more obvious in most, though not all, of the teaching rooms
- The school has developed effective links with the parishes through welcoming the parish clergy into the school to offer daily Mass and to support prayer and liturgy; the school is actively promoting the parish confirmation programmes.
- The school is improving its tutor system to offer students a more unified pastoral/ spiritual experience.
- Accommodation of RE has improved since the last inspection. The office and two classrooms are suited on the ground floor and the other classrooms are in close proximity to one another.

Grade 1

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

- Accommodation is, however, still an issue in some of the RE rooms where learning can be disturbed by the lack of a separate exit from the classroom.
- The provision of a crucifix or icon in each classroom should be a priority.
- The daily prayer in tutor time needs to be more deeply embedded as an entitlement for every student.
- Greater whole staff and departmental engagement in promoting the spiritual development of the students is planned as part of the preparation for the forthcoming mission.
- More effective implementation of tracking, target setting and intervention strategies in RE will further student achievement and standards.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

The leadership of the school offers a clear vision and sense of purpose in the Mission Statement that is regularly reinforced at staff briefing and assemblies. High expectations of student cooperation and personal responsibility are in line with the Mission Statement. The Headteacher and his team offer inspiring leadership and empower other staff to support the mission through specific in-service training dedicated to the spiritual mission of the school.

The appointment of the new lay chaplain and the two part-time assistants helps to ensure that the spiritual mission of the school is visible and engaging for both staff and students. The development plan demonstrates a sound understanding of development priorities.

The school's self evaluation is in general accurate especially with regard to whole school issues.

Grade 1

Quality of Catholic life of the school

The quality of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Students can identify the distinctive features of this Catholic school and this is supported by the weekly themes and Assemblies. Signs and symbols, such as the Bible, the crucifix, the Advent wreath and the tree of Jesse in the entrance hall, encourage students to reflect on the meaning of the Church's year. The distinctive characteristics, values and attitudes aimed at are set out clearly in the Mission Statement and its aims. In the various outreach activities that students engage in they are active promoters of the Kingdom of God. The pastoral care in the school is focussed through the work of Form Tutors who are invited to see themselves as taking a parental type role for their students, offering them time and support, and monitoring their academic progress and their personal development. The school's system of rewards encourages students to engage with their work and to support the community building activities of the school. Students feel that sanctions are used fairly and encourage better behaviour and diligence. The chaplaincy in the school is outstanding. The depth of spiritual commitment and engagement with staff and students enables the team to make a significant impact on this very large community. The school's 'Missions', offered to their associated primary schools, and developed with the Sixth Form is an excellent model for actively sharing values and faith with the wider community. The schools' commitment to partnering schools in Africa offers both staff and students wonderful opportunities to become active in changing the world we live in. The 'Caritas' project in the Sixth Form is much appreciated by the students and is to be commended. This project offers students the opportunity for Faith in Action through a youth SVP group, a CAFOD group, a Jubilee action group and a Fair Trade Group. Helping on the Soup Run, or in St Dunstan's Home for the Blind, or in working with younger children, are all excellent education in practical Christianity. Down the school the 'Eco School' initiative engages students in caring for the environment and becoming aware of our role as 'stewards of creation'. Through these and other activities the school reaches out to the wider community and brings to the wider world the message of its Mission Statement.

Grade 1

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

The provision for personal and collective worship is good. The provision of daily Mass for tutor groups offers both staff and students an excellent chance to meet local clergy and engage with the local deanery parishes. The resources for daily prayer offered in the prayer book and registers based on the theme of the week introduces students to the rhythms of the Church's year. Student involvement in assemblies and working on 'Missions' for

primary schools and in arranging music for worship is excellent. The inspiring presence of the assistant chaplains in the Sixth Form assembly clearly wins student respect and enables more students to become actively involved in the spiritual life of the school.

In the days of retreat and reflection, offered to Years 7 and 8, students are offered wonderful opportunities for developing their personal journey of faith and for personal development. The further development of similar opportunities in the upper school should continue to be developed.

Despite the offering excellent resources, training and encouragement, the practice of daily prayer in tutor groups is not consistent, with students reporting a widespread lack of compliance on this entitlement. More systematic monitoring of this aspect of the school's work should be further developed.

Grade 2

Religious education

The RE department has suffered a prolonged period of staffing difficulties through staff sickness and absence and has had to resort to the regular use of non-specialist supply teachers.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in RE are variable.

At Key Stage 3 achievement and standards are satisfactory. At the end of the Key Stage, about 61% of the students are achieving at or above their median target level. This is, however, below the national average. Student progress is not easy to assess because the tracking of student levels is still developing in the department and students are unsure of the levels they are working at and are unsure how to improve.

At Key Stage 4, the standards have improved over recent years. The vast majority of the students are now entered for GCSE, full or short course, and the grades are steadily improving. Given the staffing difficulties this is a considerable achievement. Standards in RE are satisfactory, given students' high levels of achievement in equivalent GCSE subjects. Student progress has been hampered by staff sickness and absence though the school has done everything possible to mitigate this.

At Sixth Form the standards both at AS and A-level are good with students achieving about half a grade above their median target grade.

Grade 3

Quality of provision for religious education

Teaching in RE is variable. School observations suggested that teaching was in general good with some satisfactory lessons. Overall, however, we would

judge that overall, teaching was satisfactory with some good lessons. Many students are not yet aware of the levels that they are working at or that they are being offered specific courses of action to improve target grades. These important developments are not yet embedded in the school's practice. Differentiation of work in mixed ability classes is not yet built into the schemes of work and teachers are not yet consistently using the data available to challenge students' performance.

The introduction of interactive white boards in almost every classroom and the relocation of some of the RE rooms are significant developments, but accommodation is still an issue in some classrooms where students' learning can be disturbed by the exit of another class.

Grade 3

The religious education curriculum

The curriculum offered to students is in line with the Bishops' Curriculum Directory. At Key Stage 3 the development of the new modified Icons schemes of work that has been begun will undoubtedly help to improve the delivery of more consistent levels of teaching and learning. The students seem to enjoy more active styles of learning and the further development of resources on the school intranet is to be commended.

At Key Stage 4 the year 10 module in Christian Morality and Life Issues engages students' interest and enthuses them. The year 11 course on Mark's gospel is, however, less appreciated by students who find it much less exciting. To raise standards of achievement further at Key Stage 4, the school should consider how best to achieve parity of curriculum time with other GCSE subjects.

In the sixth form the General RE programme on Practical Christianity is breaking new ground and is to be commended. Students find it engaging and feel as if they are really making a difference by their Christian social engagement. The development of this course based on the school motto 'Caritas' is an excellent development. As well as the already existing good preparation and student engagement it might be worth considering further the development of the theological/pastoral reflection on the excellent work done.

Grade 3

Leadership and management

Under the special circumstances the department has had to face, the leadership of the department is good. The provision of cover lessons for non-specialist supply teachers on a long term basis, and the maintaining and improving of standards of achievement is to be commended. The leadership of the department should concentrate on building up the confidence of his team and the expertise of the newer members of staff, raising standards of achievement at GCSE by improving the consistency of the quality of teaching, embedding the tracking of student progress and introducing appropriate intervention strategies.

Grade 2