
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Cardinal Newman Catholic School
School Address:	The Upper Drive, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 6ND
Hub:	Brighton and Hove

Telephone Number:	01273 558551
Email address:	reception@cncs.co.uk

Unique Reference Number:	114611
Local Authority:	Brighton and Hove
Type of School:	Comprehensive
School Category:	Voluntary-aided
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Number on roll:	2286 including 487 in the Sixth Form
Head teacher/Principal:	James Kilmartin

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	9-10 December 2015
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires Improvement

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	16-18 November 2016
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Good
Outcomes for Pupils is:	Good
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Good
Area of Excellence:	Not submitted for this review
Previously accredited Areas of Excellence:	

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Cardinal Newman Catholic School appears to have moved beyond the Requires Improvement grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report and is working within the Good grade.

1. Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

Information about the school

- Cardinal Newman Catholic School is a much larger than the average secondary school. It also houses Newman College that provides a range of 16-19 study programmes.
- The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the number for whom English is an additional language (EAL).
- The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities who require support is above average; the percentage of those with a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health Care plan is below average.
- The vast majority of students remain at the school for the whole of their secondary education.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- A realigned senior leadership team (SLT) is committed to implementing a wide range of initiatives. The focus on teaching and learning is to improve the attainment and progress of all students and, in particular, disadvantaged, the most able and most able-disadvantaged groups.
- The school has thoughtfully, and thoroughly, put actions in place that successfully address the EBIs in the previous Challenge Partners review. The actions for further improvement outlined by Ofsted in December 2015 have also been meticulously implemented. In the current SEF, there is significant detail explaining the impact of actions and the next specific steps required.
- The SLT's ability to monitor, at all levels, the many and varied strategies that are being employed to secure improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and standards is clear and is having a positive effect.
- The induction of thirty new members of staff, prior to their taking up posts, has been very effective, particularly relating to the protocols that form the basis of the school's improvement strategies. New staff report openly on the high levels of support and information they have received. This helps them to understand the school's expectations and systems so that good teaching and learning is secured from the outset.
- A large number of staff have chosen to undertake the in-house NPQSL and NPQML training, largely coached by the SLT. This is to build leadership capacity within the school.
- The determination to overcome the between-subject variation in attainment, progress and the quality of teaching and learning can be seen clearly in the rigorous monitoring of departments. Subject 'health checks' with examination class analyses are now in place, with overview judgements based on various quantitative

measures. As a result, this empowers middle leaders to take decisive action to improve standards in their departments.

- The level of awareness of middle leaders' accountability is raised through the regular scheduled meetings now held between curriculum leaders and Senior Line Managers. Action points from these meetings are communicated to the Headteacher.
- Constructive and effective feedback on departmental performance in Years 12 and 13 is derived from the much-valued Sixth Form Academic Council survey. This provides the Sixth Form Leader with invaluable information to use in order to improve performance.

Even Better If...

... all key leaders consistently communicated high expectations in order to challenge all students and all teachers.

...best practice within the school was used to embed the key protocols for improvement so that all staff see the benefits of the changing culture of the school.

...the 'new' lesson observation pro-forma, referencing the 'Cardinal 10' ethos, was widely used so that formative feedback encouraged protocols to be embedded across the whole school.

...the Sixth Form Academic Council's practice of reporting on seven strands of departmental performance was extended to each year group's student council in order to develop a whole school student overview.

...the strategic plan led to a sustainable year-on-year model for the SIP and SEF. This would continue to embed best practice in order to promote the highest standards of achievement for all groups, based on the school's own aspiration of achieving FFT5 estimates.

Pupil Outcomes

- In 2016, the school achieved a Progress 8 score of 0.31, an Attainment 8 score of **5.6** and 74.8% A*-C in English and Mathematics. All three of these performance indicators were significantly above national figures. The old performance measure of 5 A*-C including English and mathematics demonstrated a three-year trend analysis in which the school has improved year-on-year.
- The percentage of students achieving the English Baccalaureate is increasing, with a challenging target set for 2017.
- The school should be extremely proud that their disadvantaged students achieved a positive Progress 8 score in 2016 for the first time. In addition, the Attainment 8 score for this group has improved yearly since 2014. Similarly, the English and mathematics threshold has improved each year.

- From 2015 to 2016, there has been a positive shift in the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures in school between disadvantaged students and their peers.
- Excellent practice by the English faculty was evident when using the old measure of expected progress. Using the national figure of 2015 as the benchmark, disadvantaged students outperformed non-disadvantaged students nationally, thus completely diminishing the differences.
- Although expected progress in mathematics has declined from 69% to 63%, students making more than expected progress has increased. Steps have already been taken to address this issue in mathematics. Predictions for 2017 show a further increase in expected levels of progress for English to 87% and a significant increase in mathematics to 83%.
- The school monitors the progress of all students in Key Stage 3 very closely, having recently introduced a new 'progress pathway' system. Staff now demonstrate greater accountability because their appraisal targets link to the progress of students across all year groups.
- Rigorous monitoring, using data entry 'health checks,' ensures that students who are not making expected progress are quickly identified and the appropriate interventions established, leading to marked improvements.
- Targeted support and interventions ensure that disadvantaged students have a higher chance of success. Last year, the SLT introduced an intervention column on SIMS and this monitors all year groups. Students are working harder, leading to better outcomes. A new senior leader has been appointed to track this key group. Within the disadvantaged group, high attaining students have been identified as needing the most support and robust actions plans are now in place.
- High attaining students, according to FFT data, achieved a Progress 8 score that is significantly above the national figure. Senior leaders have successfully worked on introducing challenge into all lessons, hence this group is now performing at a higher level.
- In 2016, Advanced level attainment was above the national average for A*-E but below the national average for A*-B and A*-C. At AS level, performance significantly improved in terms of A*-B and A*-C.
- Attainment at A*-C was strong and above the national average in the following subjects at A2: computing, economics, further mathematics, geography, history, music, philosophy and ethics and Spanish. However, some subjects achieved A*-C scores below the national average. These included drama, design, media studies, physical education, psychology, law, chemistry, ICT, physics, politics and sociology. Leaders have analysed the results in underperforming subjects and have put in place strategies to improve outcomes. The forecast for 2017 indicates positive improvements in these areas.
- Overall, progress across all Advanced level subjects is in line with expectations. ALPS grade 5 is rated as satisfactory and is predicted to improve in the summer.

- In terms of subject value added, the following achieved strong value added in 2016: music, music technology, art, economics, religious studies, mathematics, further mathematics, geography, history, sociology and biology, French and Spanish. Of the vocational courses offered at the school, travel and tourism BTEC achieved a positive value added score in 2016, indicating a substantial improvement. However, overall value added for vocational courses was negative.
- The sixth form at Cardinal Newman has expanded considerably in recent years, proving its popularity. More students are remaining at the school and an increasing number join from other establishments. Leaders are constantly evaluating the post-16 curriculum offer and using this information to adopt strategies to maintain or improve standards in all subjects.
- The sixth form leadership team monitors very closely the progress of all students in Years 12 and 13. It has recently introduced a new system of monitoring department actions to improve their value added together with student progress. Staff now demonstrate greater accountability because their appraisal targets link to the progress of students.
- Rigorous monitoring, both by Heads of Department and the post-16 leadership team, ensures that students who are not making expected progress are quickly identified. Targeted interventions ensure that students make rapid progress and are on track to make at least expected progress.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Teaching and learning is generally good across the school. This is due to the professional learning sessions and the embedded Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme which support teachers' knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching staff demonstrate good subject knowledge. Questioning is used well to improve students' understanding with a clear emphasis on developing students' responses. In turn, this supports deeper thinking, promotes greater understanding and leads to improved progress.
- The positive relationships that exist between staff and students are a key strength in promoting an environment conducive to learning. Behaviour is good, mainly as a result of high levels of student engagement.
- Students are confident in their working practices and are not afraid to make mistakes, due to their nurturing and stimulating surroundings. There is a clear sense of active and purposeful learning around the school.
- Where the best teaching and learning take place, this can be attributed directly to the senior and middle leaders who have been the driving force, largely through the impact of subject networking opportunities they have facilitated.

- Assessment information is used effectively across the school to guide planning. Teachers take responsibility for the progress of their groups, resulting in improving outcomes.
- The school is in their third year of 'life after levels.' Staff have worked well with the local network and have embraced their 'Progress Pathways'. Senior leaders are confident about the use of a termly holistic grade which demonstrates clearly the trust in their teachers. A good deal of time and hard work has been invested in creating a Key Stage 3 tracking system and this is helping teachers to monitor the progress of younger groups.
- There is excellent practice in the design and technology department regarding assessment criteria, which are clearly linked to the 'Progress Pathways.' This practice should be shared across all faculties. The school is very data-rich and assessment of students is largely effective with opportunities for improvement in some subjects.
- Subject leaders have a clear vision and strive for consistency across their subjects. Clear progress has been made since the last Ofsted inspection. Senior leaders understand the barriers to achieving outstanding and are working towards removing them. A school of this size relies heavily on communication. Through the triangulation of quality assurance, expectations and communication, senior leaders are able to identify where the issues lie.
- Teaching assistants are well-trained so they are highly effective. They make a real difference to the learning of the students with whom they work.

Even Better If...

...teachers consistently embedded the school's policy regarding feedback, in both classwork and homework.

...teachers promoted more independence in lessons, incorporating more student-led learning.

...students were challenged at all levels through a whole school standardised approach.

...'Class at Glance' sheets were used more consistently to ensure the learning needs of individuals were addressed.

Quality of Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.

What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Following discussion with the Headteacher, the school would like to reflect further about what support they might like.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

