

Cardinal Newman Catholic School

The Upper Drive, Hove, East Sussex BN3 6ND

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other leaders have successfully improved the quality of education for pupils and students since the last inspection. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well.
- Governance is very effective. Governors are ambitious for the school and are integral to its improvement. They hold leaders stringently to account for any shortcomings.
- The school has a strong safeguarding culture. Staff and pupils are well informed about risks to themselves and about how they should be managed.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. A strong sense of community permeates the school which pupils and students value and contribute to willingly.
- Pupils' attainment is well above average. The proportion of pupils who achieve strong passes in both English and mathematics, and the subjects that form the English Baccalaureate, is high, and rose further in 2017.
- Pupils' good behaviour means that teachers are able to teach well-planned lessons which pupils enjoy. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are warm and respectful.
- Across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, pupils make good progress. Where differences in achievement exist, leaders are taking effective action to secure good progress for all.
- Disadvantaged pupils who left the school in 2017 did not make enough progress. Those currently in the school, and especially in key stage 3, are making better progress. Senior leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done to improve the progress of this group.
- Pupils' attendance last year was broadly average. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities now attend more regularly.
- Staff are proud to be associated with the school. Leaders link professional development opportunities both to individual teachers' needs and to the school's priorities.
- While the 16 to 19 programmes of study are good and the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is effective, leaders know that student performance can be improved further.
- Leaders at all levels have clear ambitions for the school to become outstanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all middle leaders, including those in the 16 to 19 provision, drive further improvements to raise pupils' and students' outcomes, through:
 - applying greater consistency to agreed plans for better teaching and learning
 - monitoring the impact of the performance of their subject areas rigorously
 - making sure that all learners, no matter what their starting points, are being fully challenged to produce high-quality work regularly.
- Continue to reduce the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils in the school, and nationally, by:
 - monitoring the progress of disadvantaged pupils fully so that the school's assessments provide clear details of their current performance
 - ensuring that teachers plan more effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils
 - more regularly reviewing the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that it provides effective support for disadvantaged pupils so they make the best possible progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have an ambitious vision for the school. They understand its strengths and weaknesses, and continually strive for improvement. The headteacher actively promotes a culture where leaders are reflective, highly motivated and given the respect to succeed. The school has improved well since 2015. Nearly nine out of 10 staff felt the school had improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders have developed a detailed plan for the school's priorities. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the systems for monitoring the quality of education, as well as its strategic planning for future improvements. While the self-evaluation document is accurate, it does not, however, contain specific reference to special educational needs work in the school.
- The recent reorganisation of the senior leadership team has focused on ensuring that the school priorities can be led more dynamically than in the past and lead to better impact on pupils' progress, especially for those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders have carried out a detailed analysis of the quality of teaching and learning in the last 18 months. A range of different training approaches for teachers is now better targeted and focused on 'getting it right in the classroom'. Effective practice is regularly shared in regular meetings. Newly qualified teachers say they are pleased about the care, support and opportunities they are given to develop as professionals.
- While middle leaders are improving in their capacity to drive improvements, this lacks consistency. Some of them are new to their roles and so have not had time to make improvements in their areas of responsibility, particularly with the necessary rigour in monitoring performance and using information to plan further developments. As a result, improvements in teaching are not as embedded in some subjects as others.
- The leaders for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have a comprehensive understanding of their role and the pupils in their care. The special educational needs team works with pupils effectively. The additional funding for these pupils is used appropriately to meet their needs. Consequently, pupils who are supported through this provision are making good progress.
- While the pupil premium funding is allocated to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils, their progress has not been as rapid as desired. Senior leaders have worked hard to research the most effective use of this funding. However, leaders' evaluation of some intervention strategies is not fully effective because they do not identify on a regular basis the impact of specific actions taken to raise achievement.
- Senior leaders have a clear rationale for the design of the curriculum. In key stage 4, pupils take mainly academic GCSE qualifications; however, a small number of vocational courses have been retained. Equally a support option in English and mathematics is providing good additional support for those pupils who need it. The curriculum is being improved in key stage 3, so that there is a clear progression of

ideas from primary school through to GCSE qualifications. Senior leaders ensure that transitions between key stages are managed well.

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sporting, artistic and cultural activities. Pupils particularly enjoy taking part in music and drama productions. Senior leaders monitor pupils' take-up rates of these activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is deeply embedded in the curriculum across the school, reflecting the Catholic ethos of the school. Leaders promote British values very strongly. Pupils learn about other faiths, cultures and equal opportunities. Their sense of fairness and tolerance is evident in how they interact with others, both in and out of lessons. Inspectors agreed with pupils' views that the school is a harmonious community where differences are celebrated.
- Support from the local authority and the diocesan board has also been important in checking the school's recent progress through some perceptive questioning and guidance.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear vision for the school and see education as the means to improving pupils' life chances. They are reflective and ambitious, and committed to ensuring that the school is fully inclusive for all pupils.
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, which enables them to hold leaders to account rigorously. For example, they have been uncompromising in questioning why disadvantaged pupils had not made the same good progress as other pupils. This has led to sharper planning to better meet these pupils' needs.
- The recent decision to restructure the senior leadership team was based on a thorough understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. While decisions were not taken lightly by governors, they are confident that the new structure will be a driving force for improvement.
- Members of the governing body undertake relevant training to meet their statutory duties, including developments related to safeguarding and the curriculum.
- All governors take their role very seriously in keeping pupils safe. The nominated governor attends safeguarding meetings and checks the school's records regularly, so governors know that leaders' actions in keeping pupils safe are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has developed a strong culture of safeguarding. The improvements made since the previous inspection have led to a more rigorous understanding of keeping all pupils and students safe. Staff receive comprehensive and up-to-date training. Swift and immediate actions are taken to safeguard pupils by contact with external agencies as required.

- Effective checking on the identities of all adults who have access to pupils is firmly embedded into the day-to-day running of the school. Records relating to the checking of all adults working in the school meet all requirements. Parents, carers and staff also agree that the school does all it can to keep young people safe. With the safeguarding governor, regular checking of policies and practice are in place and working effectively. This has been supplemented by a recent positive local authority review.
- Pupils know that if they have worries they will be dealt with well, as there is an inclusive culture of listening, and responding if needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The impact of leaders' actions to improve teaching is evident across a wide range of subjects and years. School data and work seen during the inspection support senior leaders' confidence that consistency in the quality of teaching and learning is now more evident across all year groups.
- Most teachers are well organised. They know their pupils well and enable pupils of all abilities to progress well in the subjects they study, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge supports pupils to make good progress. At its most effective, teachers use their subject knowledge to inspire and motivate pupils to work hard and challenge themselves in their work. In the best lessons, this enables them routinely to encourage pupils to deepen their understanding. Lessons are well planned so that pupils can easily access the learning.
- In a wide range of lessons, and across both key stages, pupils are encouraged to respond thoughtfully to teachers' skilful and probing questions. This leads to pupils improving their thinking, communication and reasoning skills, for example in English, history, geography and modern foreign languages.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils, ensuring that pupils understand what they can learn. The positive relationships between teachers and pupils promote an effective climate for learning. On a few occasions, however, pupils lose concentration, begin to fidget and waste time. This occurs when teachers have not planned tasks that extend pupils' knowledge or skills well enough, or when pupils have too much time to do their work.
- Pupils receive helpful advice on how to improve their work. Assessment in different forms is used well both to gauge exactly what pupils can do, and to provide them with guidance about what can improve further. This was seen in a wide range of subjects, in particular computing, modern foreign languages and English. However, not all teachers are consistently precise enough in using the policy for pupils to know how to make their work better in all subjects.
- Teachers use their skilled classroom assistants well to help pupils with the greatest level of need to make good progress. Good planning for the least able pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities means that they are taught at the right level to enable them to progress well. Work is carefully matched to their needs, and they frequently benefit from learning in small groups. The teaching of pupils who have weak

reading skills on entry to Year 7 is particularly effective. Many make very good progress which allows them to have better access to the rest of the curriculum.

- Well-prepared personal, social, health and economic education lessons based on up-to-date resources are delivered with enthusiasm and sensitivity, particularly on issues that could be controversial. Pupils rate these lessons highly and find them useful and informative. They can see how the topics are relevant to their present and future lives.
- A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that pupils are well taught. Pupils who spoke to inspectors share this view. Pupils appreciate the dedication of their teachers. One parent noted: 'I think that Cardinal Newman Catholic School is an exceptional school which provides my son with a great education in a supportive and caring environment.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The clear and explicit moral purpose of the school is very warmly evident. This drives the high levels of care and expectations of pupils' resilience, both socially and academically. As a result, pupils are confident and willing to participate to the best of their abilities.
- Pupils specifically value the extremely caring culture and the school's diversity. One pupil summed up the views of many others, saying: 'This is a school where we are a community. We care about what happens to each other and know how to do that.'
- According to pupils interviewed by inspectors, bullying is rare in the school. They said that if bullying occurs, teachers resolve the issues very quickly. The recent appointment of an anti-bullying coordinator has been an immediate success, with pupils recognising his value.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They have highly effective relationships with staff, which have a positive impact on their personal development. As a result, pupils are confident and play an active part in the life of the school. Many pupils participate keenly in community charity events to support local and international organisations. Pupils make important contributions to the wider community. For example, they run activities for local schools, perform in the Christmas service and support primary pupils with their reading.
- Pastoral leaders are very effective in their work. Several parents commented on the quick feedback they receive from them when concerns were aired. The detailed and successful systems in place to check on vulnerable pupils are used effectively to follow up any concerns.
- Pupils are very clear about who they would go to in school if they had a problem. They understand most local risks and how to manage them. The tutor and assembly programmes are well organised. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn about British values and participate in extra-curricular activities.

- Parental surveys show that almost all parents feel their children are happy and safe at school, with very few of the 250 responses from free-text information reflecting a negative view of the school. From the over 400 responses to Parent view, the online survey, only a small number of responses were less than very supportive about the care the school gives to its young people.
- Pupils benefit from impartial careers advice which starts early in key stage 3. Where families have no prior experience of further or higher education, leaders make sure that they get the advice and guidance they need. Pupils are highly aspirational, and many are exceptionally well informed about their next steps.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually good. They behave respectfully towards their teachers and each other. The Caritas code of conduct is followed well by pupils and students alike. Pupils told inspectors that this was because the school's ethos is understood by everyone, and all pupils want to maintain that.
- Vulnerable pupils benefit from support from the effective mentoring team, which includes Clay, a therapy dog, who has been instrumental in encouraging several pupils to attend school on a more regular basis. The Zaccheus Centre in the school successfully supports pupils whose behaviour is affecting their learning adversely.
- Pupils' use of inappropriate or prejudicial language is extremely rare, and pupils told inspectors that if this language is ever heard, teachers take immediate action.
- Pupils behave well when they are moving around the site, socialising at break and when having lunch. They are punctual both in arriving at school in the morning and in attending their lessons.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to explain how it has recently improved. They take a pride in their work, which is generally well presented. While most wear their uniforms with pride, not all do so.
- Attendance has improved in the last year to be in line with national averages. Persistent absence is decreasing well, as the school has taken a range of actions to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Exclusions are dropping and have been lower than those recorded nationally for the last two years.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment at the age of 16 has been above the national average for the last few years. The proportion of pupils attaining a standard pass in both English and mathematics, and in the English Baccalaureate, was well above the national average in 2016 and 2017. Equally, the proportion of pupils attaining a strong pass in English and mathematics was above the national average.
- In 2017 at the end of key stage 4, overall, pupils made substantial progress. The progress of most groups of pupils was significantly above the national average in a

range of subjects including English, modern foreign languages, science and humanities. In the majority of GCSE examinations, pupils make better progress than pupils nationally. The most able pupils made good progress but this was not as marked as that made by pupils of other abilities.

- Pupils are making good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Current assessment information shows that pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. Inspectors confirm this from a close scrutiny of pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils overall, and in most of their subjects, was below the national average in 2017. Leaders and governors have subsequently put in place well-planned actions to deal with this shortfall, agreeing with inspectors that these pupils must now make more accelerated progress to reach the national average for progress for all pupils. More rigorous monitoring of their performance and more effective support has led, overall, to disadvantaged pupils making progress in line with other pupils in the school in many subjects.
- The least able pupils are supported well. Teaching supports these pupils by providing work which is well matched to their needs. In 2017, the progress of this group was better than that of other pupils nationally who had similar starting points.
- Across the school pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well. Teaching assistants are well deployed alongside additional resources to support this group, which includes pupils with an education, health and care plan. The inclusive ethos of the school contributes strongly to the academic progress they make. This reflects their good progress and attainment recorded in GCSE examinations in 2017.
- Pupils' literacy skills are improving because most teaching ensures that a regular emphasis is placed on pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils who start Year 7 with weak literacy and numeracy skills are catching up with their peers because of the extra support the school provides for them. However, not all subject areas insist on the same standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar as does the English department.
- A small number of key stage 4 pupils attend courses with other local providers. Senior leaders monitor their learning closely and ensure that these pupils attend well and make good progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. A higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally go on to secure places in education, employment or training when they leave the school.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have ensured that they deliver an effective 16 to 19 provision with a range of both academic and vocational courses which meet the needs of students. Retention rates are above the national average.
- Leaders are ambitious for their students. They have put numerous strategies in place over the last two years to improve the consistency of provision and to improve

outcomes. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching in the sixth form. However, they acknowledge there is scope for greater rigour with the current tracking processes, so that the rate of progress in many subjects can be increased.

- Teaching, learning and assessment is improving this year. Current strengths include teachers' subject knowledge, teacher–student working relationships, and teachers and leaders knowing their students very well. The quality and quantity of work produced by students show they are making good progress from their starting points. Students are well supported through high-quality resources, prepared well by teachers in subjects such as economics and politics. These are all contributory factors in the better progress seen, and the improved outcomes indicated for this year.
- Outcomes in mathematics, further mathematics, fine art, history, music technology and German were above average in 2017. Overall, students typically made progress in line with the national average. Current data shows incremental improvements in a growing majority of subjects. Leaders have particularly focused on improving progress in biology, chemistry, politics and physical education, where students have not made good improvements in the recent past.
- Students with low starting points do well in the sixth form because of the support that they receive. For example, current students have already achieved a pass grade in GCSE English and/or mathematics this year well above the national average. This reflects a similar performance last year. This has been achieved because of the improved support that they receive from specialised staff.
- Through a programme of tutorials, staff ensure that students understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Students are encouraged not just to consider their own safety, but also to look out for each other and report any concerns to staff quickly. Senior staff have successfully helped students to develop resilience so that they are better able to cope, for example when they feel anxious about their work. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Students report that there is little poor behaviour and that bullying is virtually non-existent.
- The school provides a range of work-related activities, particularly for disadvantaged students. Students hoping to have careers in medicine or law access work experience, and those following vocational courses gain practical experience as part of their studies. Leaders have further plans to extend more work-related activities for all students in the 16 to 19 programme.
- Students are well prepared for their next steps. They aspire to a wide range of challenging study and careers. The percentage of pupils not in education, employment and training is well below the national average. As a result of effective support, all pupils in 2017 went on to appropriate destinations.
- Students receive high-quality, impartial careers guidance and advice. This allows students to progress to employment or further education, including universities, because they make informed choices.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 114611 |
| Local authority | Brighton and Hove |
| Inspection number | 10040934 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Voluntary-aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 2,260 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Tim Williamson |
| Headteacher | James Kilmartin |
| Telephone number | 01273 558551 |
| Website | www.cncs.co.uk |
| Email address | j.kilmartin@cncs.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 9–10 December 2015 |

Information about this school

- Cardinal Newman Catholic School is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Since the previous inspection, about a quarter of the staff has changed at different levels of seniority across the school.
- Most pupils are White British. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average, yet the proportions of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding is below that found nationally.
- The school uses Brighton Metropolitan College, Plumpton College and One Church for its alternative education provision for up to 12 pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11. The school meets the government's minimum standards for sixth-form students' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from:
 - 52 visits to lessons, often carried out jointly with the school’s senior leaders
 - meetings with staff, governors and representatives from the local authority and the diocesan board
 - discussions with pupils
 - reviews of pupils’ work in books
 - an examination of the school’s website, key documents, such as those relating to safeguarding, assessment information and school surveys
 - observations of the daily operations of the school, including tutor periods, breaktimes and lesson changeovers.
- Inspectors analysed the 423 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, alongside the 250 free-text replies to the same questionnaire. The team also took into account the 72 pupil and the 137 staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaires.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hugh Betterton, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Lucy English | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Clare Gilles | Ofsted Inspector |
| Colin Lankester | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alan Powell | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sian Thornton | Her Majesty’s Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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