

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School and Language College

Potters Green Road, Coventry, CV2 2AJ

Inspection dates		11–12 December 2013
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good 2
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate 4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses

- Progress is not good enough in some subjects, particularly in mathematics where it has been below expected levels for the past three years.
- More-able students are not always challenged enough in lessons. They do not make enough progress and too few attain higher than expected grades.
- The sixth form requires improvement because standards and progress, though improving, are broadly average.
- Teachers do not always check students' understanding thoroughly in lessons.
- Students sometimes rely too much on their teachers and do not help themselves to learn.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that match the full ability range of their classes.
- Low-level disruption slows learning in some lessons.
- The school's self-evaluation is too generous. It does not make sufficient comparison between the school's performance and that expected nationally in terms of progress and standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is improving. Progress is also improving, particularly in Key Stage 3, because of the effective ways in which the leaders are managing teachers' performance and professional development.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to students' learning and behaviour.
- Students feel safe in school. They report that bullying is rare and that when it occurs the school deals with it well. Most students behave well and are courteous and respectful.
- The school provides a high level of care and support for students, particularly the most vulnerable.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 41 lessons or parts of lessons, including a joint observation with the headteacher. They looked at work in students’ books, listened to students read, visited an assembly and observed break time activities.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, three members of the governing body, key staff, students and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents looked at included the school’s view of its own performance, information on students’ progress and documents relating to safeguarding, school management and the curriculum.
- Parents’ views were taken into account through the 177 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) as well as the school’s most recent survey. The inspection team also considered 59 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Mary Le Breuilly, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector
Anne White	Additional Inspector
Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Additional Inspector
Frank Knowles	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School and Language College is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support students, for example those known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is above average.
- The proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds is above average as is the percentage of students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at the Tile Hill Student Referral Unit. Some students also attend work-based placements, Henley College or City College for part of the school week.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement, particularly for the more able, for pupils eligible for the pupil premium, and in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons that include activities that match the full ability range of students
 - ensure that each student is aware of the challenges set for them
 - helping students develop their skills in learning independently
 - ensuring teachers assess students' understanding in lessons more effectively so that they know whether they should adapt their lessons and which students need more help.
- Tackle low-level disruption in order to improve progress for all students.
- Ensure that the school's leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and are rigorous in comparing the school's performance to national figures.

An external review of governance, including the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2013, the proportion of students gaining five A*-C grades including English and mathematics was below average and represented a drop in attainment from the previous year.
- In a number of subjects students made insufficient progress in 2013. In mathematics, progress has been well below that expected for the past three years and too few of the more-able students attain at higher than expected grades. This is mainly because of previously inadequate teaching. Progress in French and in humanities was also poor. In the case of humanities this poor progress was because students had only had one year to complete their GCSE course.
- As a result of improved teaching, students' progress is accelerating and they are making up for previous underachievement. School data show that current progress for students in most year groups and most subjects, including mathematics and English, is similar to that seen nationally. This is particularly true for Key Stage 3 students whose progress is good because they have benefited from better teaching. Since joining the school these students have made progress that is similar to national levels and, at times, better. However, the legacy of poor progress in previous years remains a problem for some students in the current Year 11.
- By the time they leave Year 11, students supported by the pupil premium are about a grade behind their fellow students in both English and mathematics. For the past two years the progress made by these students in English and mathematics has been well below that of their peers, particularly in mathematics. The most recent school data show that gaps in progress have narrowed to about half a grade for students currently in the school.
- Disabled students and those who have a special educational need make progress that is at least in line with other students and sometimes better. This is because they receive appropriate intervention and support that helps them to improve.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and students who speak English as an additional language show very positive attitudes to learning and often make better progress than their peers. The school provides good support to these students and they quickly acquire English to a level that allows them to play a full part in lessons.
- In 2013, attainment in the sixth form was broadly average at A level and for work-related qualifications, though the percentage gaining higher grades was below average. Progress in most subjects was broadly in line with that expected. However, in a small number of subjects, including mathematics, business studies, psychology and media studies, and representing about a fifth of the total A-level entries, it was inadequate. Data from recent AS-level results show an improvement and the school's information shows all students are on track to pass AS levels with an improved proportion at the higher grades. Progress in Year 12 was in line with national averages for all subjects in 2013.
- Students in alternative placements at college, or on work-related learning programmes, make better progress compared to their previous progress in school. As a result their engagement with learning improves and some go on to enrol for further education courses.

- The school makes extensive use of early entry to GCSE. While this strategy helps vulnerable pupils, or those whose attendance is poor, it is not of significant benefit to many students in the year group, including the more-able, because it restricts the time they have to gain higher grades.
- Pupils supported by the Year 7 catch-up premium benefit from the additional support they receive, which helps them to keep up with their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching, including teaching in the sixth form, requires improvement because, when considered over time, students are not making enough progress in a number of subjects. Even so, most of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. Improvement in the work seen in students' books is as a result of the better teaching and shows that progress is accelerating. School and Local Authority monitoring also shows that teaching is improving. Changes in staff have supported these improvements. Students themselves told inspectors that teaching is getting better. Students in Key Stage 3 have benefitted from improvements to teaching since their entry to school.
- Teachers do not always plan effectively to extend every student in the class. Sometimes teachers do not tell students what they are expected to learn, and particularly for the more able.
- Where the teaching is good or outstanding students show enthusiasm and are interested in what they are learning. In less effective lessons there is often a passive attitude from students and in some lessons students are half-hearted in their approach to learning.
- The strategies that teachers use to check students' understanding in lessons are not always effective. These often consist of simply asking students who do not understand to put their hands up. Many students are reluctant to admit they do not understand the work in front of the whole class. As a result, teachers are not aware of how well students are learning and some students have not properly understood the work before the teacher has moved on.
- Teachers do not encourage students to think things through for themselves and to turn to each other before looking to adults for support. As a consequence, students often rely too much on teachers for help. This results in the pace of learning slowing down because teachers are busy answering individual queries.
- In the best lessons, teachers provide activities that motivate and engage students and encourage them to take an active part in their learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson on probability the teacher used a logic puzzle to capture students' interest. At such times lessons move at a brisk pace and activities stretch students of all abilities. Teaching assistants provide well-focused support for students who find the work more difficult.
- Teachers are aware of their responsibility to develop students' language, communication and mathematical skills in their subject teaching. They provide appropriate opportunities for the development of these skills. Students say they are encouraged to read and valuable time is set aside for reading.

- Marking is often helpful and students appreciate the time and effort their teachers spend on it. Students say that the comments give helpful guidance about how to improve. Most students are aware of how well they are doing and can explain what is needed if they are not on course to reach the expected grade.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Most students behave well. However, low-level disruption in some lessons from a minority of students sometimes slows the learning down. On these occasions, students who are more reluctant to engage in learning are quickly distracted and lose concentration.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students are eager to learn and contribute well to discussion and debate. They provide good role models for younger pupils.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to supporting students who sometimes find it difficult to behave appropriately. The behaviour of some of these students improves to the point where they no longer need support.
- Care and support are highly effective. The school works well with outside agencies to provide for the needs of potentially vulnerable students. A range of support is available that is having a positive impact on student well-being.
- Students are welcoming, open and friendly to visitors. Relationships are generally respectful. Students say they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of the importance of understanding and observing e-safety. Students stated that incidents of bullying and racism were rare and dealt with quickly. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school is relentless in its pursuit of equal opportunities for all students.
- Attendance has improved. It is now broadly average as a result of a wide range of measures put in place by the school. Staff are working effectively to improve attendance and their strategies are having a positive impact, particularly in the younger years.
- Exclusions for inappropriate behaviour have been reduced as a result of increasingly effective behaviour-support strategies.
- Most parents have positive views of the school. The school is working creatively to engage with parents. The recently introduced 'learning conversations' involving parents, students and teachers are having a positive effect.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school leaders' view of the school's effectiveness is too generous because it does not compare how well it is doing to other schools nationally. There is a good programme of monitoring and evaluation but the analysis of the information this generates has not been used to best effect so that all leaders are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

- The leadership team and middle managers are now using this information to better effect and driving teaching, attainment and progress forward. In the sixth form too there is an increased awareness of how well students are doing.
- Performance management targets help to drive staff development and school improvement. Teachers are very positive about the help and support they are given to improve their teaching. There is a comprehensive programme of professional development. There is also a culture of openness that means teachers who are struggling with aspects of their work feel able to seek support. As a result teaching is getting better, resulting in the recent and marked improvements in students' progress particularly in key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 progress is accelerating too as a result of this more rigorous management but some students still have lost ground to make up.
- The school has made some recent changes to the curriculum so that it is better suited to the needs and interests of its students. A suitably broad range of subjects is offered and an increasing number of alternatives to GCSE. Good opportunities are provided for students to seek independent advice and guidance in preparation for their next stage of learning.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well. There are frequent fundraising activities for charity and strong links with a school in Malawi. A valuable range of trips and visitors are used to provide views of the world that extend beyond the school and its community.
- The local authority has undertaken a review of behaviour and safety at school which contributed positively to the management of behaviour and safeguarding practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities for development and they provide appropriate support and challenge. They understand the use of performance data and accept that the school needs to improve students' achievement at GCSE and in the sixth form. However, they have relied too heavily on the interpretations of performance provided by the school and have not made enough use of national comparisons.
 - Governors are fully aware of the links between pay and the quality of teaching. They know that additional pay is awarded to teachers only after a successful review of performance. They also understand what the school is doing to tackle underperformance.
 - Governors take their responsibilities for financial management seriously and ensure resources are used wisely. They are clear about the purpose and uses of the pupil premium funding, and are aware that it has not had the desired impact until recently.
 - The governing body ensures that arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet current requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103744
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	429483

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1285
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Garner
Headteacher	Helen Knight
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2010
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