

Inspection of Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Honey's Green Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L12 9HZ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School is a learning community where pupils have great respect for each other. Teachers support pupils to become highly articulate young people who can express their views well on a wide range of issues.

The pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel happy and safe at school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is very high. They are confident that staff will deal with any concerns that they have.

Leaders have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, courteous and very well mannered. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive. For example, pupils enjoy playing games with the headteacher at lunchtime.

Leaders do not tolerate any derogatory behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying are extremely rare. They said that if bullying does happen, teachers respond quickly and firmly to resolve any issues.

Pupils benefit from studying a wide range of subjects. Leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Most pupils achieve well.

Leaders organise many opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons and to deepen their understanding of the world. Pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of clubs and sports.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school. They promote a culture of 'positive attitude and ambition'. Leaders have taken effective steps to make many improvements since the previous inspection, especially in relation to pupils' behaviour. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. A typical comment received from a parent was that the school is 'fantastic'.

Leaders have developed detailed and appropriate curriculum plans, including in the sixth form. These plans ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for everyone. Plans include the precise knowledge that pupils should learn and in what order. Teachers use curriculum plans well to design learning activities that enable pupils to build on what they already know and can do.

Pupils revisit their learning regularly. Teachers use assessment information well to identify any misunderstandings that pupils may have in their learning. Teachers take effective steps to address any misconceptions. As a result, pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum. Students in the sixth form also achieve well. Leaders have placed the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) at the heart of the curriculum. More pupils now study languages than was the case in the past. The

number of disadvantaged pupils studying chemistry, physics and biology is also increasing. As a result, the proportion of pupils studying the full suite of EBacc subjects is rising. Students in the sixth form follow appropriate and well-planned courses.

Teachers identify the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. They are equally adept at adapting subject content so that these pupils can learn the same ambitious curriculum as others in the school.

Leaders have a clear focus on developing pupils' reading and vocabulary knowledge. Pupils read regularly and fluently. Pupils use their vocabulary well to construct detailed arguments and debates. This is especially the case for sixth-form students.

A small number of subject leaders are new to post or lack experience of leadership. Sometimes, the systems within these subjects to check on the quality of education are less well developed. This stops them from gaining an accurate insight into the strengths and weaknesses in the subjects that they lead and sometimes hinders their ability to promote further improvement.

Leaders have created a culture in which pupils are highly motivated. Pupils show exemplary behaviour. They demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. This is particularly evident in the work of the school council.

Leaders have put in place a strong programme to support pupils' personal development. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, understand how to look after their own physical and mental health. They use this knowledge to keep physically healthy and maintain an active lifestyle. Teachers support pupils to be confident, resilient and independent. Disadvantaged pupils, and those pupils with SEND, take a full part in many of the aspects of school life.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, benefit from being part of pupil and student associations. For example, they are particularly proud of their medical association.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They are confident in discussing issues relating to relationships and sex education. Teachers also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain effectively. Pupils are tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Pupils benefit from a well-designed careers programme that meets statutory requirements, including the Baker Clause. Leaders help a high proportion of pupils to continue their education further, including at universities.

Staff enjoy working in the school. Senior leaders, including the headteacher, manage the school well. Teachers said that leaders consider their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Leaders have very effective arrangements in place to identify pupils needing help. They work well with other agencies to provide timely support to pupils and their families.

Staff know how to identify those pupils who are at risk of neglect, grooming or sexual exploitation. They are vigilant for concerns and know how to spot signs of abuse. Staff help pupils reduce their risk of harm. They take a proactive approach to issues, including online abuse.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are clear about where they can get help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of curriculum areas, leaders are new to post or lack the skills that they need to evaluate the quality of education in their subject. As a result, the systems to check on the effectiveness of the curriculum in these subject areas are sometimes less well developed. This stops leaders from knowing what they need to do to improve the subject area further. Senior leaders should ensure that appropriate training and support are in place for all subject leaders so that they can successfully check on the quality of the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	104714
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10200800
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,389
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Glover
Headteacher	Karen Smyth
Website	www.cardinal-heenan.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new chair of the governing body was appointed in December 2020.
- The school has a joint sixth-form provision with Broughton Hall Catholic High School.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The school's most recent Section 48 monitoring inspection was on 3 October 2019.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Alder Centre Education (ACE), West Derby School, Barton Moss, Liverpool Education Employment Partnership (LEEP) and the Everton Free School.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. They also held telephone conversations with representatives from four alternative providers and a consultant employed by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. They also looked at minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour.
- An inspector looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. Meetings were held with those responsible for safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 73 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors also considered the 60 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including the 59 free-text responses.
- Inspectors also considered the 183 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, design and technology, and languages. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and groups of pupils. In addition, inspectors reviewed curriculum planning in geography, science, computing, and personal, social, health and economic education.

Inspection team

David Hampson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Jean Tarry	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Farrent	Ofsted Inspector
Lindy Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Gregory	Her Majesty's Inspector

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