

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Honeysgreen Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside L12 9HZ

Inspection dates

24–25 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require further improvement across a broad range of subjects. In 2017, the progress that pupils made did not meet the government's floor standards.
- Leaders' school improvement plans are not always sharply focused on the school's priorities. School leaders do not consistently review and evaluate improvement plans effectively enough. Consequently, improvements are not routinely rapid and secure.
- Leaders have not used additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Therefore, the outcomes of these pupils require improvement.
- Despite improvements since the last inspection, the quality of teaching is too variable between and within subjects, including in mathematics and history.
- Teachers do not routinely set pupils challenging enough work, especially for those who are most-able. Consequently, these pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- Teachers do not regularly plan and ask questions that challenge pupils. As a result, pupils do not routinely have opportunities to deepen their thinking and extend their responses.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good because the school's ethos and values are embedded in daily life. Most pupils behave well and attend regularly. They say that they are well supported and feel safe.
- Governance has strengthened recently. Governors now challenge school leaders more robustly and are determined to improve the standard of education the school provides.
- Leaders ensure that pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. It prepares them well for their next steps in education.
- The quality of education provided in the sixth form is good. It is stronger than the rest of the school because the quality of leadership and teaching is less variable. As a result, students' outcomes are good.
- Pupils' reading has improved since the last inspection. Most pupils, including those who join the school with lower starting points, read well.
- Leadership and teaching in science have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are taught well in English.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - increasing the impact of leaders' plans and actions by ensuring that they have a tight, sharp focus on the school's improvement priorities
 - ensuring that leaders monitor, evaluate and refine improvement plans regularly and effectively
 - ensuring that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is managed effectively so that these pupils attend regularly and make at least the same progress as other pupils nationally.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and so accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - eradicating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, including in mathematics and history
 - improving teachers' use of questioning so that pupils are routinely challenged to think hard and improve the quality of their answers
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information more effectively so that they routinely set pupils, especially the most able, the challenging work needed for them to make the progress they should.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders' vision for pupils, with a focus on care and strong aspirations, is in place in the ethos and culture of the school. This is valued by the community that it serves. Consequently, more pupils apply to join than can be accepted each year.
- School leaders are clear that the outcomes of pupils who have taken their Year 11 examinations have not been good enough across a broad range of subjects. In 2017, the progress that pupils made did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11. Leaders' work to improve teaching and pupils' progress has led to improvements recently but variability remains.
- Senior leaders' plans to improve the standard of education at the school are not consistently effective. Where plans have had greatest impact, such as improving leadership and teaching in English, school leaders have worked with colleagues from the local authority and archdiocese to plan, monitor and evaluate actions regularly and precisely. Accordingly, teaching is regularly good in English. Improvement has been slower and less secure in areas where plans lack a sharp focus and effective monitoring. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes across a range of subjects are variable.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of what effective teaching looks like. Accordingly, they have accurately identified aspects of teaching which are regularly stronger and those that need to improve, such as the challenge provided by the work that teachers set for those pupils who are most-able. Teachers, including those who are newly or recently qualified, say that leaders have established a culture of professional development across the school which leads to improvements in the quality of teaching. However, this training and support are not securing consistency in the quality of teaching.
- The school has a larger-than-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The progress that these pupils made in 2016 and 2017 was significantly less than that of other pupils nationally. The school's use of the additional funding for current disadvantaged pupils is more effective than was the case previously. However, leaders do not monitor and evaluate, and then refine, their actions fully effectively. Consequently, plans to ensure the good education of disadvantaged pupils have not eradicated inconsistencies in these pupils' outcomes, especially those who are most-able and join the school with high starting points. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is closer than it was previously to that of others nationally but this improvement has recently stalled.
- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well used and has a positive impact on their education. The support they receive is well matched to their specific requirements, so they follow a broad and balanced curriculum. The progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make is regularly monitored, and is stronger than was the case previously, partly because of the better attendance of some of them.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding effectively. Pupils receive a range of support matched to their needs in literacy and/or numeracy. Accordingly, most of these pupils

make good progress and catch up with their peers. Inspectors listened to Year 7 pupils who joined the school with lower-than-average levels reading. These pupils read confidently and say that they enjoy reading.

- Leaders regularly review the subjects that pupils are offered. This ensures that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which matches their needs. However, they do not routinely make the progress that they should because of inconsistencies in teaching. Pupils follow a range of academic, arts, technical and sporting subjects at key stage 3. The choices available to pupils at GCSE account for the strong academic aspirations of pupils and are designed to prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils' GCSE options include biology, chemistry, physics, art, drama and music, all of which are popular with pupils. A broad and rich range of cultural, creative and sporting activities take place beyond lessons. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend these regularly.
- Leadership of careers education, information, advice and guidance is effective. It includes strong links with local universities, who visit the school regularly to raise and support pupils' aspirations to good effect. The impartial advice that leaders organise means that pupils move on to a range of post-16 destinations, and that those who join the school's own sixth form have made that choice in their best interests. Almost all pupils move on to education, employment or training.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school because it is securely embedded in the school's ethos and practice. Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain and develop a strong sense of community. Pupils have a clear understanding and knowledge of fundamental British values, including their rights and responsibilities.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved recently and is now more effective. Previously, governors accepted information provided by school leaders too readily, especially regarding pupils' educational standards. Governors recognised this and so recently completed training to improve their understanding of how pupils' progress is measured. Other training has helped to ensure that the challenge they provide senior leaders is now more rigorous and effective. Consequently, records of meetings demonstrate that governors are now more challenging in holding leaders to account.
- Governors have not previously been effective in ensuring that school leaders use the additional funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. Their stronger governance and the pupil premium review which is a requirement of this inspection will give them greater insight into holding leaders to account in this area.
- Governance has been strengthened by the specific skills of recently appointed governors. For example, governors have work-related and specialist knowledge in financial management, school administration and safeguarding. Governors manage the financial security of the school well.
- Those responsible for governance promote the school's vision and ethos clearly and effectively. Pupils are valued and well cared for. This underpins school life and is a strength of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders, including those responsible for governance, rigorously promote and ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders have used external reviews of their safeguarding systems to reflect upon and refine their practice. Accordingly, there is an effective culture of safeguarding at the school.
- Staff, including non-teaching staff, are vigilant in identifying potential risks to pupils, such as radicalisation, drug-related dangers, bullying and pupils' mental well-being. Concerns are reported and acted upon effectively.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. There are systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- School leaders work effectively with parents and carers and external agencies and act swiftly when required. School leaders work closely with a linked police liaison officer to support pupils who may be at risk or to address areas of community concern. Checks made by inspectors demonstrated that referrals are followed up in a robust manner and that record-keeping is good.
- Most pupils, parents and staff say that pupils are safe and well looked after. Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including e-safety. Pupils know who to report concerns to and how to do this. The school has filters in place to prevent inappropriate internet use.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently effective in ensuring that pupils make the progress that they should. Variability remains across and within subjects, and across year groups. For example, teaching is generally strong in English, drama and Spanish, but is typically less effective in some other subjects, especially mathematics and history.
- Where teaching is less effective at improving pupils' outcomes, teachers do not routinely use the assessment information they have about pupils to plan work at the correct level. Therefore, pupils are often set the same work as their peers, regardless of their starting point or understanding. The most able pupils are too often not provided with the challenge they require to make consistently good progress from their higher starting points.
- Most teachers use questioning regularly to assess and secure pupils' knowledge and understanding. In some subjects, including English, teachers plan questions that require pupils to think and reason deeply, and pupils respond with detail and articulacy. At other times, such as in history, pupils with higher starting points are not asked sufficiently challenging questions so that they can make the progress that they should.
- Leaders have introduced assessment systems recently to help them monitor and evaluate pupils' progress more effectively than has been the case previously. Leaders now identify and support those pupils who are falling behind more quickly and accurately. Leaders' actions to support pupils who have fallen behind to catch up with their peers, including extra-curricular sessions, are showing early signs that they are improving these pupils' learning.

- Teachers use different techniques to inform pupils how to improve their work across a range of subjects. This is especially effective in English, Spanish and drama. Teachers plan interesting activities and use their strong subject knowledge to make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. Consequently, pupils make alterations and resolve their misunderstandings, for example when performing or speaking.
- Leaders have acted effectively to improve pupils' reading since the last inspection. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to read regularly. Many read at a standard in line with others at their age nationally. Most teachers plan work that challenges pupils to write at length, so pupils write well across a range of subjects. Teachers often tackle any misconceptions that pupils have with spelling, punctuation or grammar effectively. Teachers build in opportunities to practise and embed pupils' mathematical skills across the subjects that they teach. For example, in geography, pupils use graphs to interpret climate and people's lifestyles in other countries.
- Teachers usually manage behaviour successfully and ensure good standards of conduct and positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, pupils usually take care over the presentation of their work, bring the correct equipment and engage well in lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are sometimes less strong when they are not set challenging enough work.
- Most pupils and parents say that homework is set regularly and the work that is set is of an appropriate standard. School leaders also ensure that reports are sent home regularly with information about pupils' recent outcomes. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, confirmed that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders, including those responsible for governance, place great value on pupils' personal development and welfare. These aspects are strengths of the school. They are at the core of daily life and given priority by staff. Consequently, most of the pupils that inspectors met during the inspection spoke positively about their school. They say that they are valued as individuals, are well supported by staff and would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils learn about fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures. They told inspectors that they respect differences and tolerate views that are different from their own. Pupils say that racism and homophobia have no place at the school.
- Most pupils say that bullying is rare at the school. When bullying does take place, pupils know how to report it and say that it is dealt with effectively by school staff.
- Leaders' plans to support the transition of pupils from primary school are thorough. Staff visit most of the large number of primary schools from which pupils join the school. They gather information and share this with teachers and other adults, so that they are aware of pupils' educational backgrounds and requirements, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, Year 7 pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they are happy at the school and they feel safe.

- Pupils know how to identify dangers and remain safe online. They receive regular reminders from staff of how to keep safe in this area. Pupils' online safety is further supported by the safety checks, including filtering systems, established by school leaders.
- Pupils that inspectors spoke to said that the school teaches them how to remain mentally and physically healthy. The promotion of healthy eating within the curriculum and the healthy choices that are available in the school canteen have a positive impact on pupils' diet. Pupils' emotional well-being is in sharp focus, and the school employs a professional counsellor to support pupils. Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The school provides effectively for the personal development and welfare of the very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance overall is consistently in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is also in line with the national average. School leaders recognise that the steps they take to improve the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils need to be more effective so that they are closer to those of others nationally.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons. Disruption to learning is rare and dealt with effectively by teachers. For the great majority of the time, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. However, pupils sometimes lose concentration when the work that they are set is not challenging enough. Pupils are confident and courteous, so their relationships with peers and staff are generally positive.
- Leaders ensure that the school is well maintained. Most pupils treat the school environment with respect. At break, lunchtime and change of lessons, pupils generally move around the school in an orderly manner. School leaders support pupils effectively to arrive punctually to school in the morning and to lessons.
- School leaders manage the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' examination results in 2016 and 2017 were lower than the national average across a broad range of subjects. In 2017, results were below the government's minimum floor standards.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work, including those pupils due to take their examinations in 2018, showed that pupils' progress is better than was the case previously. This improving picture is reflected in records provided by school leaders. Pupils generally make strong progress in English and their outcomes in science have improved. However, pupils' progress in history and mathematics is too variable.

- The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been accurately identified by school leaders as a priority for improvement. There are more disadvantaged pupils in the school than is the case nationally. The proportion of pupils at the school who are disadvantaged is rising year by year. Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in 2017 were significantly lower than those of other pupils nationally across a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Work seen by inspectors shows that the differences between current disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing and the progress that disadvantaged pupils make is showing improvement in some areas. However, variation remains and, for the most able disadvantaged pupils, it is especially slow to improve.
- The outcomes for the most able pupils across a range of subjects in 2017 were often markedly below those of similar pupils nationally. Information shared by school leaders and the work seen by inspectors show that the outcomes for current most-able pupils demonstrate improvement and strength in more areas than was the case previously, including in English and science. Despite this, too much variation remains, and these pupils do not routinely make the progress that they should, including in history and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is stronger than was the case previously. Staff know these pupils well and so ensure that the support they provide is well matched to the pupils' needs. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are set work that challenges them across a range of subjects, especially in key stage 3. As a result, more of them are making the progress that they should.
- Year 7 pupils who joined the school with low starting points in literacy and/or numeracy are making good progress, especially in reading. Leaders use the additional funding provided to support these pupils in catching up with their peers.
- Leaders monitor the outcomes of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision effectively. They are generally strong, so these pupils move on to next steps in further education, employment or training successfully.
- The proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training is in line with the national average. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum and strong careers guidance. Despite pupils not consistently making good progress in the past, many have attained the threshold qualifications required for further study. Consequently, they have been accepted for their preferred choices of next steps in further education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership, teaching and outcomes in the sixth form are good. Consequently, it provides a standard of education that is better than the rest of the school.
- The sixth form is led effectively. Leaders have maintained the good standard of education seen at the last inspection. Sixth-form leaders evaluate sixth-form provision accurately, so plans that they put into place to further improve standards are effective. They are especially successfully in creating an ethos of positive aspirations for students.

- Most students follow A-level courses, although a small number opt for the vocational qualifications offered. Leaders ensure that the A-level courses students are offered include those that prepare them well for university applications.
- All students that inspectors spoke to said that they were pleased with their decision to join the sixth form. They said that they make strong progress, are supported well and feel safe and well prepared for adulthood. They spoke with maturity and represented sixth-form leaders' vision of aspiration and high standards.
- Students' outcomes are routinely good. They make good progress in A-level courses and, in 2017, students' attainment in A-level examinations was close to that of others nationally. The progress of the small number of students who follow vocational courses is good and, in 2017, the attainment of students who sat qualifications in these subjects was better than that of others nationally. Sixth-form leaders monitor the progress that students make from their GCSE and key stage 2 outcomes to ensure that any who underperformed in their key stage 4 courses are appropriately supported and challenged. As a result, pupils with high key stage 2 outcomes make good progress from these starting points in the sixth form, so they are well prepared for their next steps in education or employment.
- Students say that they make good progress because of the strong standard of teaching in most areas. This view matches that of inspectors. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they deploy enthusiastically and effectively. They assess, monitor and evaluate students' progress regularly and use this information effectively to overcome misconceptions or plan activities that challenge students' thinking. Consequently, students routinely learn well and make good progress in academic and vocational subjects.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides students with a rich experience which meets all the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Students' personal development is a strength and they speak positively about their high-quality non-qualification activities. For example, these include work experience placements which are well matched to students' courses and interests. In addition, students take up a variety of student leadership roles to support the extra-curricular activities of pupils in key stages 3 and 4.
- Students planning to join the sixth form benefit from the high-quality and impartial advice that they are given. Consequently, those who decide to join are well informed about its academic ethos. As a result, few students do not complete the courses that they start, their attendance is high and their behaviour is good.
- Leaders take effective measures to ensure that the small number of students who need to resit GCSE English and/or mathematics are taught effectively. Consequently, the outcomes of these students in both subjects now exceed those of others nationally.
- Students benefit from well-planned and effective careers guidance in the sixth form. School leaders have established strong links with local universities, who support students throughout the sixth form with impartial advice and guidance. Disadvantaged students and those who do not have a family tradition of university education are supported effectively. As a result, students routinely move on to a range of destinations which match their high aspirations and good examination outcomes. A significant proportion of students move on to higher education and Russell Group universities.

School details

Unique reference number	104714
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10042427

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,331
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Tremarco
Headteacher	Karen Smyth
Telephone number	0151 235 1430
Website	www.cardinal-heenan.org.uk
Email address	admin@cardinal-heenan.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 January 2016

Information about this school

- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at Alder Centre for Education, Central Schools Training and Everton Free School.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, members of the governing body, a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on issues including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of supporting documentation, such as the school’s self-evaluation, the school’s improvement plan, the school’s assessment information, the school’s pupil premium plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors considered 38 responses to the Ofsted online parental questionnaire and 71 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and visits to lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of their visits to lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils’ books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

Inspection team

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Nell Banfield	Ofsted Inspector
Lenford White	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted 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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