

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College

Old Oscott Hill, Kingstanding, Birmingham, West Midlands B44 9SR

Inspection dates

21–22 September 2016

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. She has driven forward improvements in teaching and has shown great determination in improving all aspects of the education that the school provides. An effective senior leadership team supports her well.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good across the school. Teachers and other staff share school leaders' high expectations for what pupils can and should achieve.
- All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. Staff match provision for the most vulnerable pupils well to their specific needs.
- The proportion of most-able pupils who attain the highest grades at key stage 4 is improving thanks to the school's focus on the attainment of this group of pupils.
- Governors have a clear understanding of how the school is doing. They effectively hold leaders to account and provide good levels of support and challenge.
- The school prepares pupils well for life as citizens in modern Britain.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and show respect and tolerance for the beliefs of others.
- Pupils are polite, well behaved and appreciative of the many opportunities that the school offers. They feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.
- Leaders at all levels work closely with a good neighbouring school to improve the school's provision for its pupils.
- Attendance has improved substantially over the last year and is now above national levels.
- A few teachers do not consistently use assessment and feedback to help pupils improve their work. A very small minority of subject leaders have not routinely checked the impact of this aspect of teachers' work.
- There are times when a few key stage 4 pupils do not excel because teachers' expectations of what they know and can do are not high enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' assessment and feedback helps pupils to improve their work and do well in all subjects.
- Make sure that all subject leaders routinely check the impact of the work in the area for which they have responsibility so that pupils do well.
- Make sure that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils in key stage 4 should know and can do so that they can make outstanding progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders, led strongly by the headteacher, have worked tirelessly to create a culture that promotes positive attitudes and that expects the best of its pupils. At the same time, there is a strong focus on promoting equalities and inclusion, recognising the diversity in the school's community and the city in which the school is located. The school has high expectations not only in terms of academic success, but also for personal conduct and community cohesion. These high expectations apply to both pupils and staff. This culture of high aspirations has resulted in motivated and increasingly successful pupils. Staff prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders and governors know their school well. Their accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses allows them to intervene effectively where necessary. Over the past year, they identified the teaching of mathematics as being particularly weak. They worked closely with a successful neighbouring school in order to secure improvement. This collaboration extends to other subjects. The partnership proves to be very effective in developing the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders have put in place effective systems to monitor pupils' achievement in all subjects. When pupils do not achieve as well as they should, leaders identify the reasons for this and intervene swiftly. As a result, the majority of pupils are now making good progress in subjects where, until recently, progress was slower than could have been expected, particularly in mathematics.
- Senior leaders manage the performance of teachers rigorously. The school's clear line management structure allows for leaders at all levels to gather a range of information relating to teachers' performance to determine salary progression.
- The new leadership structure of the school is effective in supporting improvements in teaching and learning because senior leaders and subject leaders work closely together to monitor teaching. They regularly conduct visits to lessons, check pupils' books and speak with pupils. Consequently, most leaders have a precise understanding of the quality of teaching. They use their findings from monitoring to provide appropriate support and training to teachers whose performance falls short of the expectations set. It is clear from the school's records that teachers benefit from this approach and improve their practice as a result.
- Leaders put a great emphasis on providing effective training for teachers. This training focuses on ensuring that teachers have opportunities to observe and adopt the best practice found not only within the school, but also in the successful local secondary school with which they collaborate closely. Most of the staff who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school supports their professional development well.

- Leaders analyse in detail barriers to learning that affect the progress of pupils and are determined to remove them. For example, they have identified that a large proportion of the pupils who join the school are not as fluent at reading as they should be. To help pupils catch up, they have adopted an accelerated reading programme for all pupils, from Year 7 to Year 11. Mid-morning, every day, all pupils have a 30-minute guided reading session with teachers who monitor their progress. The senior leader in charge of literacy keeps track of the progress of individual pupils and records improvements in reading ability by age.
- The leadership of the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effective. These pupils have individual learning support plans which identify their needs and the support they require. The coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities regularly monitors the progress of these pupils. As a result, these pupils make good progress across all years, and across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders are clear about their responsibility towards pupils who are supported by additional government funding, such as the pupil premium. They analyse the needs of disadvantaged pupils, devise appropriate strategies to enhance their education and monitor the impact these strategies have on their personal development and progress. As a result, differences in progress and achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are reducing quickly.
- The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of subjects that are designed to raise pupils' aspirations. The headteacher and her senior colleagues have a clear vision for broadening further pupils' learning experience so that they have access to wider educational and employment choices when they leave school. As well as a focus on improving the provision for the teaching of English and mathematics, leaders have appropriately detailed plans for the development of science, humanities and the arts. Pupils benefit from impartial careers guidance and have opportunities to visit universities, attend talks given by speakers from a wide range of professional backgrounds and do work experience.
- A wide range of enrichment activities support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils effectively. These activities include trips and visits, including visits to science museums, a retreat in France and a visit to Oxford University for the most able. Pupils can also enter inter-school sporting as well as debating competitions or musical and drama performances. When pupils start school, staff give them a 'pupil pledge' that lists 15 'things you should do before leaving school'. This pledge includes activities such as 'take part in a residential trip', 'help to make a change in your community', and 'visit a place of non-Christian worship'. The range of activities on offer, and the way in which the school encourages participation in these, help pupils to become active and responsible citizens.
- Subject leaders and teachers manage assessments effectively to ensure that the information they provide on pupils' progress is accurate and that teachers use this information to plan lessons that enable all pupils to make further progress. However, some key stage 4 pupils are not clear about what their examination target grades are in a few of the subjects they study. As a result, those pupils are not fully aware of what they are capable of achieving and lack the necessary guidance and drive to excel further.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly effective and have, between them, a wide range of relevant skills which allow them to bring a high level of expertise to their role. They share the responsibilities for the strategic leadership of the school through their roles as link governors for specific areas, and as committee chairs.
- Governors can identify accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have the confidence to develop a clear understanding of issues that they identify through their own monitoring activities and to challenge senior leaders when it is appropriate to do so. This ability to analyse and enquire makes governors particularly effective in driving forward improvements. They closely monitor pupils' achievement and are probing if subjects are not performing as highly as they expect. They keep a check on the quality of teaching and learning through meetings with leaders and teachers, and they closely monitor the impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium, on disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors take very seriously their responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe. They regularly check that the school's safeguarding procedures are up to date and robust, and know how to deal with safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that not only are all records and staff training up to date, but also that the school has developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels have a clear understanding of what they must do if they are concerned about pupils. There are clear procedures in place to intervene swiftly to protect vulnerable pupils. Senior leaders make sure that pupils do not miss school due to their personal circumstances or background.
- Staff and pupils are aware of the issues related to extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Through collaboration with a successful local school, subject leaders and teachers have the opportunity to observe and adopt effective practice to help them provide enhanced learning experiences for pupils. This ongoing training and collaborative work are creating the conditions for a culture of continuous improvement of teaching and learning in the school.
- Teachers plan their lessons meticulously and have strong subject knowledge. As a result, teachers deliver lessons that pupils find interesting and help them to make good progress. Teachers are skilled in asking questions to deepen pupils' understanding and to keep pupils' motivation high. Pupils of all abilities are therefore able to develop their knowledge and skills effectively during lessons.

- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils take pride in their work, work together well, participate in lessons and show respect to their teachers. Pupils speak highly of the support and encouragement they receive from their teachers. The harmonious atmosphere that prevails in classrooms reflects leaders' drive to create a positive culture of learning.
- Pupils present their work well. Most teachers mark work in accordance with the school's policy. Most teachers' comments in pupils' books provide detailed feedback that enables pupils to improve the quality of their work over time. There was clear evidence that most pupils were acting upon the advice and recommendations that featured in their books.
- Teachers set homework, on a regular basis, which is relevant and provides opportunities for pupils to expand their understanding and skills. Pupils who talked to the inspectors were positive about homework. Some of the older pupils commented on the fact that the quality of the work set had improved considerably over the last two years.
- Subject leaders and their teams work hard to ensure that assessment of work is accurate. All are aware that they need to have precise information on the progress of pupils in order to monitor their achievement. In addition to the regular moderation of the assessments that take place within the school, middle leaders and teachers meet with their colleagues from their partner school every term to moderate each other's work. As a result, there is a high level of consistency in the way pupils' work is assessed, and accurate information is available for leaders to monitor progress.
- The school library provides very effective support to the development of reading. The librarian works closely with the literacy leader to select books which are relevant to the needs and interests of pupils. Pupils who experience serious difficulties with reading pair up with older, most-able pupils who act as reading mentors. A literacy mentor supervises the scheme and it proves particularly effective with those pupils who speak English as an additional language who have joined the school recently.
- Teachers focus on pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum and closely monitor pupils' grammatical accuracy in their written work. This has led to an improvement in the ability of pupils to express themselves and to access information.
- There is now an increasingly high level of consistency of approach to teaching and learning across the school. Newly appointed subject leaders work well together and have clear plans in place to ensure that the quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard across the curriculum. However, some of these leaders have only been in post for a few weeks and have not had time yet to fully evaluate and embed best practice. For example, a few teachers are not using their assessment of pupils' work to consistently identify and correct pupils' mistakes and misconceptions. As a result, a very small minority of pupils do not make as much progress as they should.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils are at the heart of the school's work. Through the use of 'Wiseman virtues' staff seize every opportunity to promote tolerance and respect. As a consequence, pupils have a clear understanding of the multicultural nature of British society. They know the difference between diverse ethnic and religious groups and are aware of the need to be tolerant towards other people's beliefs and cultures. Pupils know about and understand the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- The school's lay chaplains provide highly effective support, particularly for those who are vulnerable or who are experiencing difficulties. Pupils know that they can talk to them when they are in need of support and advice. They also know that they can talk to all staff in the school about any concerns.
- School staff work well with external agencies to cater for pupils who have emotional and behavioural issues, those who are experiencing difficulties, or those for whom there are clearly identified barriers to learning.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic, sexual and cyber-bullying, and know why all types of bullying are unacceptable. They say that bullying is rare and that teachers deal with it well. The detailed records that the school keeps confirm this.
- In all year groups, pupils have the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility within the school and are keen to do so. Younger pupils, for example, can apply to become librarians. The school council is also popular among pupils, with senior leaders taking into account the school council's recommendations for improvements.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. Most parents who responded to parental surveys agreed that their children are safe.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, both within school and when they are away from school. They recognise the potential dangers that the internet could pose to them because staff provide them with comprehensive information on how they can remain safe.
- Senior leaders closely monitor the welfare of pupils who are educated by a local external provider. A visit to the external provider by one of the inspectors confirmed that communication with the school is highly effective and that the progress and well-being of pupils who are educated there are good and closely monitored.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Senior leaders make clear their expectations of how everyone should behave. These expectations are part of every teacher's practice in the school and pupils understand them. Pupils appreciate the incentives they get for positive behaviour and understand that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and respect when either adults or other

pupils are talking. They behave well in lessons and take pride in their work. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare in lessons.

- Behaviour around the school is good. Movements between lessons are orderly and safe. Pupils' conduct during breaks, at lunchtime, as well as when they arrive and leave, is a credit to the school. Pupils take pride in their appearance.
- Attendance has improved dramatically. The proportion of pupils who attend school regularly is now above national levels. This is due to the actions of senior leaders, who have been relentless in making sure that all parents are fully aware of the consequences of their children missing school.
- The proportion of exclusions has reduced because of the actions that leaders, teachers and other adults involved in the school are taking to ensure that pupils who have challenging behaviour receive appropriate support.
- There is a small group of pupils who on occasions find it difficult to adhere to the school rules. The school has made a contractual arrangement with a local school that specialises in the education of pupils who have emotional and behavioural issues. Leaders manage this arrangement very effectively. They are fully involved in the monitoring of the progress of the pupils concerned. The school that accommodates these pupils praised the quality of leadership and care shown by the staff at Cardinal Wiseman.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Senior leaders and governors have analysed the reasons behind the decline in pupils' outcomes in 2014 and 2015, and have taken appropriate action to address this decline. The provisional GCSE results for 2016 show a very significant improvement since 2015. These results match senior leaders' predictions. This provides a clear indication that leaders have been both rigorous in the implementation of their action plan and accurate in their monitoring and evaluation of impact.
- The performance information for current pupils indicates that pupils at key stage 4 are achieving well and are making good progress, not only in English and mathematics, but also across a wide range of subjects. Current progress, in nearly all of the subjects that performed poorly in 2015, is much improved and is broadly in line with national levels.
- Current information for key stage 3 is also positive in terms of pupils' progress. The school's performance information indicates that the large majority of pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Inspectors' review of work in pupils' books confirms the information leaders provided that pupils are currently making good progress.
- The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils nationally is reducing. In many subjects, disadvantaged pupils are performing as well as those who are not disadvantaged. The school's performance information for current Year 11 disadvantaged pupils indicates that they will achieve more highly across their best eight qualifications than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- There are an increasing number of pupils in the school who speak English as an additional language. Current information on the progress of this group of pupils shows that they are catching up with other pupils and are in line to achieve as well as other

pupils nationally.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities across all year groups make good progress across the curriculum. The accurate evaluation of the needs of these pupils and the support that they receive through their individual learning plans are proving to be very effective.
- The school's information for key stage 3 pupils show that a large number of pupils in Year 7 who receive support due to having weak literacy make good progress. This is due to the extensive support they receive.
- Senior leaders and governors had identified the progress of the most able pupils as one of the school's key priorities. Leaders have also been focusing on the most able pupils who are also disadvantaged, as part of their drive to raise aspirations. They are closely monitoring the progress of these pupils. It is clear from lessons observed and work in pupils' books that staff are implementing plans to ensure that the most able pupils fulfil their potential successfully. As a result, the proportion of the most able pupils who, according to the school's information on current Year 11 pupils' progress, are working towards achieving the higher grades at GCSE is increasing and is in line with national levels across the curriculum. The school's performance information also indicates that the attainment of the most able, including the most able who are disadvantaged, is improving at key stage 3.
- Leaders have put in place a new structure to develop careers information in order to raise aspirations, especially targeting the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attend the school. As part of this new approach, the school is closely monitoring pupils' destinations when they leave school. The large majority of pupils who left last year progressed to a course or apprenticeship which was of a suitable level and which matched their career plans.

School details

Unique reference number	103539
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10020000

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	545
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick McDermott
Headteacher	Christina Stewardson
Telephone number	0121 360 6383
Website	www.cardinalwiseman.net
Email address	cstewardson@cardinalwiseman.net
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College is considerably smaller than most secondary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above average. Seven out of 10 pupils are supported by the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at different times during the academic year is above average, and increasing.
- The school places pupils who may require additional support on alternative provision at Saint George's Academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work from a range of subjects, in both key stages 3 and 4.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of pupils from across all years. The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority's commissioned services, and Hamstead Hall Academy's head of school, who supports the school. An inspector also visited the alternative provision at Saint George's Academy.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, between lessons and after school.
- Inspectors took into account 37 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 44 members of staff who responded to the questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a variety of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation of its provision and its development plan. Inspectors also considered information relating to achievement, teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and governance.

Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Lunt	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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