

Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood

Melbourne Avenue, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8AY

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The executive headteacher, headteacher, governors and senior leadership team provide outstanding leadership.
- A whole-school focus on improving teaching and students' academic and personal development has led to significant improvements across the school. The school has an excellent ability to continue to improve further.
- From their usually broadly average starting points, students make consistently good progress in a wide range of subjects. By the end of Year 11, they reach standards that are above average in most subjects, including English and mathematics. Standards have risen over the last three years and continue to do so.
- Teachers have high expectations of students. Their excellent subject knowledge is used to ensure lessons interest and engage students in learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed.
- Students behave outstandingly well. They are courteous and polite, relate very well to each other and to adults and are very happy at school. They are very enthusiastic about learning. This contributes significantly to their good progress.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is above average.
- Students feel very safe. The school is rigorous in keeping all students safe. Students are cared for very well. The well-being of all students is as highly regarded as their academic success.
- Parents, staff and students are very positive about the school and highly value the quality of education and the care that it provides.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of students is outstanding and is an integral part of school life. Students are very well prepared for the next stage in their education or employment and for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' progress occasionally slows because they are not always provided with work that challenges them to reach their full potential, particularly for the most-able students.
- Students are not always required to respond to the written guidance they are given about how to improve their work or to explain their own thinking.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. Inspectors carried out some of these observations jointly with the executive headteacher, headteacher and members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with two groups of students and also talked to a number of students in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, including senior leaders, with a representative from the local authority and with staff at the unit that some students attend at off-site alternative provision. They also met with the Chair, Vice-Chair and other members of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of the 161 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised students’ work with senior leaders and considered a range of documents. These included documents about the school’s strategies to enable leaders to gain an accurate view of its performance, school improvement plans, data on students’ progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector
John Ashley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cardinal Allen Catholic High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion that speak English as an additional language is much lower than average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is lower than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are supported through the pupil premium funding is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional funding to provide support for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has specialisms in mathematics and computing. It holds various awards, including the BECTA award for ICT, Design Mark for technology and Eco-Ambassador status.
- A small number of students attend a pupil referral unit, the McKee Centre, run by the local authority for periods of up to six weeks. A minority of students in Years 10 and 11 attend Blackpool and Fylde College of Further Education once a week to follow vocational courses.
- The executive headteacher is currently working in an executive capacity to support another school within the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by improving the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - students, particularly the most able, are always provided with work which challenges them to reach their full potential in lessons
 - students are always required to respond to the written guidance given to them about how to improve their work and are encouraged to explain their thinking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher and the headteacher, strongly supported by senior leaders and governors, provide very clear direction and have established a culture of high expectation and ambition. They are determined that students will achieve their potential as learners and reach the best standards. The school reacted swiftly and successfully to dips in attainment and rates of progress in 2014 in science, English and history and standards have risen rapidly and strongly as a result of their actions.
- The school is characterised by its focus upon improving teaching and learning, and its culture of sharing best teaching practice. This culture is adopted by all staff and is at the core of the school's drive to continuously improve. It is founded securely upon a high level of honest and open professional dialogue and a shared ambition to achieve excellence. Through their very close monitoring of students' progress, leaders know that they are yet to ensure that the most able are always effectively challenged and that some marking does not always require students to respond or improve their work. The school's work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence has proved very successful.
- Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the performance of the school. Leaders are highly skilled at working with staff to improve their teaching, so that it captures students' interest and involves them in their learning. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and students' progress holds teachers very effectively to account. Leaders have established systems within the school, such as the teachers' forums where best practice is shared, to support them in doing so. It is clear that pay progression is linked to improved teaching, leadership and achievement. In the rare event of any underperformance, it is swiftly and appropriately managed.
- Middle leaders are also well focused on improving teaching and outcomes for students. They have an excellent knowledge about how well students and teachers perform within their areas of responsibility, due to the regular monitoring of teaching and learning that they undertake.
- The curriculum is a real strength of the school. The school revises its curriculum effectively in the light of the needs of its students. Students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy and information and communications technology are well promoted, for example by working with others and problem solving. Very good opportunities are provided for all students to develop their reading skills and to promote a real love of reading.
- Students are able to follow both vocational as well as academic courses through links with the local college. The school rigorously monitors the achievement, behaviour and attendance of those attending off-site courses so that they achieve well.
- The curriculum ensures students are very well prepared for the next phase in their education or training as well as for life in modern Britain. For example, the programmes students follow in their tutor time, such as to address contemporary issues like racism and radicalisation, and have had a significant positive impact upon students' behaviour and attitudes towards others. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for students' personal development. There are many additional opportunities for students to pursue their interests and develop new ones, as well as to experience the cultures of other countries. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, enriches the curriculum.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted and pervades the life of the school. It is strongly promoted through the curriculum as well as the culture of the school and is an indication of how well the school promotes equality of opportunity for all, fosters excellent relations and tackles discrimination very effectively.
- The careers education and guidance students receive very effectively supports them in making choices about their next steps in education or training. Students in many year groups spoke of the value they attach to the independent advice and guidance they receive from the school, and how it helps them in their career paths and choices.
- Leaders are rigorous in their monitoring of the use of pupil premium funding and the impact that this spending has on outcomes for disadvantaged students. They ensure that it is used to provide effective support for disadvantaged students and enables them to make the same good progress as other students.
- There are highly effective safeguarding procedures which protect and ensure the safety of students, and which fully meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly effective in their role and governance is outstanding. They are clear about their

responsibilities and are fully involved in checking the performance of the school. They are very well informed, hold leaders to account extremely well and provide excellent support. By working alongside leaders, they contribute to and monitor the school's performance. This includes observing lessons and canvassing the views of parents and students.

- Governors are very clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They understand the school's and national comparative performance data and what it means, as well as the quality of teaching. They are active in making sure that arrangements for managing the performance of staff are highly effective. They ensure that decisions regarding pay progression are rigorous, fair and consistently applied across staff, rewarding those who perform well. The governing body manages the school's resources and finances very closely, including the impact of the use of extra funding, particularly the pupil premium funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They arrive at lessons promptly and get on with their work willingly, demonstrating a thirst for learning.
- Expectations of students' behaviour are high. Students rise to these and take responsibility for their behaviour. They show excellent attitudes to learning and a very strong desire to do well and produce their best. Their work is presented with care and students maintain a lively dialogue with their teachers about how to improve.
- Low-level disruption is extremely rare. Outside lessons, students behave very sensibly during the changeover of lessons, during break and lunchtimes. Students listen attentively in lessons and the mutual respect which exists between staff and students is palpable. They also have excellent relationships with each other, work very effectively together in small groups and pairs, and support each other very well. They are very polite and respectful, and clearly enjoy their time in the school.
- Students are keen to say how proud they are of the school and how much they enjoy their learning. They play a full part in decision-making in the school and take their responsibilities, for instance as prefects and mentors, very seriously.
- Staff, students and parents have a very high opinion of behaviour and how positively this contributes to students' learning and enjoyment. Bullying or any form of discrimination is infrequent and vigorously discouraged. On the rare occasions when it does happen, students are confident that it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Students with special educational needs or who are vulnerable receive excellent care and support from staff within the school to make good progress.
- Attendance has improved and above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged students has made particular improvement over the last year due to the school's focus on supporting them.
- Attendance, punctuality and behaviour at alternative provision are checked regularly and extremely effectively so that students achieve consistently well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school is meticulous in its efforts to keep students safe. The school has highly successful systems in place to ensure that all aspects of safety are rigorously maintained. All leaders are diligent about safeguarding and keeping students safe. These procedures are regularly checked and updated.
- Governors and staff have a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding & child protection issues and are given frequent updates. Risk assessment systems are of a high standard and take account of stakeholders' views.
- The school works closely with other agencies to ensure that students are safe and supported very well. The students themselves have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and of potential risks; they know how to protect themselves against these, including racism or bullying and when using the internet and mobile phones.
- Students are actively involved in preventing and tackling bullying in all its forms, acting as anti-bullying mentors for their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching enables students to make consistently good progress in almost all subjects, including in English and mathematics throughout the school over time. Evidence gathered from observing lessons, reviewing students' work and performance data confirms this.
- Teachers know students well; they have high expectations of them and of what they can achieve. Students respond extremely positively to this, are enthusiastic learners and take responsibility for their work and progress. They are keen to achieve the high targets set for them and do well. For instance, in mathematics, Year 11 students relished the opportunity to explain their thinking in solving problems concerning simultaneous and quadratic equations to the class. They listened attentively to the teacher and to each other in attempting the most challenging problems.
- Typically, the most-able students are regularly challenged and overall teachers expect them to produce a very high standard of work. They respond to this challenge positively. The majority exceed their targets in most subjects as a result. Even so, on occasion, the progress of students, particularly the most able, is sometimes slowed because they complete work they find too easy before being able to tackle more challenging tasks. Leaders are aware of this and teachers are already working together to share best practice in this area.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed. They are effective in supporting students who are disadvantaged or who have a disability or special educational needs, to learn and make consistently good progress over time.
- Written feedback in students' books is usually of a high quality and is a key factor in students making consistently good progress. It supports students' understanding of both how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve further in order to reach the targets set for them. Many students maintain a lively dialogue with their teachers about this. However, sometimes students do not always respond to teachers' written guidance in comments or revisit their work to improve it and this is not always challenged.
- The teaching of literacy is a strong focus for the school. It is effective and has a significant impact on students' learning and progress. Students are regularly required to answer searching questions or to explain their thinking to others. The teaching of numeracy is also effective, especially in subjects such as science and technology. Teachers promote numeracy well through requiring students to apply their mathematical skills and understanding to solve real-life problems in these subjects.
- In lessons, ideas are presented clearly to pupils using visualisers and interactive white boards. Staff monitor students' progress very closely and adapt their teaching and support students to make even better progress. Questioning is used to good effect to check understanding and to enable students to think things out for themselves. As a result, students increase in confidence and independence as learners as they move through the school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is broadly average in most years and they make good progress as they move through both key stages in most subjects, including in English and mathematics. Attainment in GCSE examinations is consistently above average and significantly so in a wide range of subjects.
- Students do particularly well in mathematics, design and technology, and in information and communication technology. Inspection evidence and school data indicate that there have been significant improvements in the progress students make in English, history and science over the past year.
- The proportion of students who gain five or more A* to C grades is above average. The proportion of students who are on track to gain the highest grades is increasing. Inspection evidence shows students' performance continues to be above average overall and that they continue to make good and sometimes better progress.
- Students do particularly well in design and technology, information technology and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that there have been significant improvements in the progress students make in English and science over the past year.
- Over time, the proportions of students making or exceeding the nationally expected rate of progress from their various starting points are above average in mathematics. In English, they are improving strongly.
- Disadvantaged students make the same good progress as others in the school from their various starting points and gaps in performance are closing. In Year 11 in 2014, disadvantaged students were about three-quarters of a GCSE grade below other students in the school in English and a grade behind other students nationally. In mathematics, they were over a grade behind other students in the school and nationally. However a significant proportion of these students in 2014 also had complex needs. School data and inspection evidence shows that these gaps in attainment between disadvantaged students and

other students nationally have closed in both English and mathematics.

- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs also make good progress over time. They are very well supported both academically and in their personal development, and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The curriculum is well matched to their needs, and their learning and progress is good because of this provision.
- The most-able students make good progress in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects. This is because they are taught well and access a wide-ranging, relevant and challenging curriculum. Some students enter GCSE examinations early but this is not limiting the potential of the most-able students. However, occasionally, their progress is slowed because they sometimes have to wait to be given more challenging tasks.
- Students improve their literacy and numeracy skills consistently in all subjects. In nearly all the work reviewed by inspectors, students apply their reading and writing skills very effectively to enhance their achievement. They apply their mathematical skills equally effectively.
- The small number of students who attend a pupil referral unit run by the local authority along with those students in Years 10 and 11 that attend Blackpool and Fylde College of Further Education to follow vocational courses achieve well.

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	119799
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	461777

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	805
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Waters
Headteacher	Philip Mooney
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2012
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