

Cardinal Griffin Catholic College

Cardinal Way, Stafford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 4AW

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2018

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has created a culture where pupils are well cared for. Strong relationships between pupils and staff help pupils feel secure and promote their personal development well.
- Teaching is good across a wide range of subjects. Consequently, current pupils are making good progress. However, there remains some weaker teaching in the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, respectful and courteous to adults and to each other.
- Governance is effective. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. They challenge senior leaders effectively.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of clubs, educational visits and after-school activities. However, the quality of careers provision is not consistently strong across year groups.
- Pupils attend school regularly. They value their education and the few who do not attend regularly are supported to improve quickly.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. However, some weaknesses remain in the progress of pupils in French and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported in their learning. Consequently, they make good progress.
- Pupils typically receive useful feedback from their teachers, in line with the school's policy. This supports them to improve their work.
- The sixth form is a strength of the school. Good leadership of the sixth form ensures that post-16 students make consistently good progress in academic and vocational courses.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say that they are well cared for and they feel safe.
- Staff value the school's professional development programme. However, the training teachers receive does not focus on weaknesses identified by leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in science and French to match those evident in other subjects by ensuring that teachers:
 - make regular checks on pupils' understanding, so that pupils benefit from clearly directed and timely support
 - plan lessons that are well matched to the needs of pupils.
- Sharpen the impact of leadership by ensuring that:
 - careers education is well planned throughout the school
 - training is well focused on those subject areas that need to improve the most.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school well. The school's values and its Christian ethos underpin everything it does. A culture of tolerance, respect and kindness is modelled by staff and pupils. This means that pupils feel very well supported and safe.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They take effective actions to make improvements. Following weak results in some subjects in public examinations in 2017, the headteacher refocused the efforts of the school community. As a result, leaders have made significant and sustained improvements in most areas causing concern. Leaders have therefore decisively halted the decline in outcomes, and current pupils are making good progress in most subjects including English, mathematics and humanities.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders, including governors, have a clear rationale for the curriculum that ensures that all pupils have access to a range of academic and vocational subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is a strength of the school because leaders create rich and varied opportunities for pupils to become reflective, resilient and caring citizens. For example, all pupils study religious education enabling them to develop their understanding of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds.
- Pupils are well prepared to take an active role in modern Britain. Pupils in all year groups benefit from a wide range of opportunities to take part in enrichment activities. One pupil spoke to inspectors about how the school has helped him learn to ride a bike safely.
- Leaders have developed effective systems for tracking the progress of pupils across all year groups. As a result, leaders have a sharp focus on the current performance of pupils. They take action when pupils begin to fall behind with their work and this helps pupils catch up.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is highly effective. Improvements in outcomes for pupils in these subjects have been rapid and sustained.
- The leadership of SEN is effective. Additional funding is well spent and, as a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium is having a positive impact. Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils with similar starting points across the curriculum and throughout the school. However, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils remains below that of other pupils nationally. Leaders' plans for further improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils are clear and well focused.
- Staff value the professional development provided by the school. Many staff spoke positively about the training they had received on exam marking and how this was supporting pupils to make better progress. However, the training teachers receive tends to be generic rather than subject-specific. Consequently, teaching in some subjects is not improving as quickly as it could.

- Trainee teachers feel well supported by school leaders. They value the mentors appointed to oversee their induction and development.
- The quality of careers provision is weak in key stage 3. Leaders do not have a clear plan for ensuring that pupils make progress in their careers education throughout the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors play an active role in the school. The experienced governing body provides both good support and effective challenge to school leaders. Governors have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Governors are committed to the school and share the vision and ethos of the headteacher. They visit the school regularly, both formally and informally. They carry out their statutory duties.
- Governors take responsibility for improving their own skills. They have audited their skills and are taking effective action to address any gaps in their knowledge.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. The values of support and care are evident across the school. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult to talk to if they have a worry or concern. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe and well cared for in the school.
- Staff benefit from training and regular briefings on all aspects of safeguarding. They understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They are vigilant and know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil.
- School leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported. School staff work very well with parents and carers and the local authority to protect pupils in need of care and support.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children feel safe in school.
- Statutory procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are efficiently managed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good in most subjects. Teachers' strong subject knowledge supports pupils to make good progress. Where teaching is strongest, questioning is effectively used to confirm and reinforce understanding. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils' starting points to target their questions effectively. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils, including the most able pupils, and set challenging activities in lessons. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, pupils

were expected to think hard because they had to give reasons why the rules of indices worked. This supported their learning well.

- The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are effective. Teachers use assessment information well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and then plan activities to address these gaps.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils take pride in their work and pay attention to their teachers. Pupils feel confident in expressing their ideas and listen to each other respectfully.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well by their teachers. Teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of these pupils and consequently they make good progress.
- Teachers routinely follow the school's feedback policy. Pupils value the feedback provided by their teachers.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy. Pupils told inspectors that they found the homework in mathematics and English useful, and that this was helping them improve.
- Where some teaching is less effective, for example in French and science, teachers do not make regular checks on pupils' learning. As a result, pupils do not get the support they need to improve. Occasionally, teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils already understand, know and can do when planning lessons. When this is the case, the work set is not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are welcoming, polite and courteous.
- Pupils spoke confidently about the intolerance of bullying behaviours in the school. One pupil told inspectors: 'When it does happen, teachers deal with it swiftly.' Consequently, pupils have confidence in school leaders to take their concerns seriously.
- Pupils spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about how the school makes them feel valued and part of a community. One commented that: 'Staff care for you as if you were part of their family.' Teachers know their pupils well and this ensures that all pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils' mental well-being is a priority for leaders. Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to guidance about mental health. During the inspection, students in the sixth form were preparing an assembly for younger pupils on the importance of mental well-being.
- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum and during assemblies. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe including when using technology.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In most lessons, and in all year groups, pupils are fully committed to learning. They settle to work quickly as a result of clear, whole-school expectations. In a small minority of lessons, a few pupils lose concentration when teaching is not pitched appropriately or when they do not know what is expected of them.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is of a high standard. They wear their uniform with pride and move calmly between lessons. Pupils behave maturely at breaktime and lunchtime, gathering in small groups to talk.
- Leaders have created a culture where pupils manage their own behaviour. One pupil said: 'We behave because we know it is the right thing to do.' Leaders ensure that the school environment is positive and nurturing. It recognises and celebrates pupils' success. Consequently, pupils treat the school environment with respect.
- Pupils are punctual and well prepared for lessons. As a result, learning time is hardly ever wasted. Pupils respond promptly to instructions from teachers and support staff.
- Attendance is broadly average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below the attendance of other pupils in the school. However, as a result of working closely with pupils and their families, attendance for disadvantaged pupils is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils' attainment is improving across the curriculum. School assessment information and inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress in a wide variety of subjects.
- In English, current pupils make strong progress because they are given challenging work to do. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are appropriately stretched in English, and so make good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils in all year groups make good progress across a range of subjects. Published GCSE results in 2017 showed that the progress of disadvantaged pupils was similar to that of other pupils, with similar starting points, nationally in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils continue to make excellent progress in a number of subjects including art, religious education and resistant materials. In these subjects, teaching is consistently effective.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because they are well known as individuals and receive targeted support in lessons and other times.
- Published information about pupils' progress at the end of Year 11 shows some weaknesses for the most able pupils. Leaders, including governors, have taken swift action to address this. As a result, most-able pupils are now making better progress in mathematics and humanities. Although some weaknesses remain in science, pupils' books show good progress across a range of year groups.

- Attainment and progress in French have remained weak over a number of years. As a result of the actions of school leaders, pupils' progress is now improving. However, it lags behind the progress that pupils make in other subjects.
- The proportion of pupils who move on to education, employment or further education is broadly in line with national averages.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is highly effective. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form. They have high expectations of students and know them very well. All students are encouraged and supported to achieve their aspirations through personalised study programmes. Students undertake relevant work experience that is well matched to their interests and career aspirations.
- Students make consistently good progress on academic and vocational courses. In 2017, pupils made above-average progress in physics, sociology and psychology. Very few students enter the sixth form without having achieved a good pass in both English and mathematics. Those who do, retake these subjects, and most students improve as a result of effective support.
- Retention rates are strong. Almost all students complete the course that they start at the beginning of Year 12. The proportion of students moving on to employment, education or training are consistently higher than those seen nationally.
- Teaching is effective across a wide range of subjects. It does not share the weaknesses evident in some subjects in the main school. Students, often taught in small classes, benefit as a result of timely support from teachers. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and keep a careful check on pupils' progress.
- Students behave impeccably and provide excellent role models for pupils in the main school. They enjoy supporting younger pupils in a variety of ways. They make a valuable contribution to school life including as ambassadors for promoting good mental health.
- Students benefit from the wide range of opportunities available to them. They are keen to take part. A very high proportion attend sporting activities as part of their extra-curricular provision.
- Students' attendance, which was below that in the main school in 2016/17, has improved this year as a result of the actions taken by leaders.
- Students are safe and feel safe. Leaders have ensured that there are robust procedures in place for ensuring that pupils are safe when moving between sixth-form providers. Students demonstrate a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe from potential risks.
- Impartial careers guidance prepares students well for higher education. However, the support is less effective for students not intending to proceed to higher education.

School details

Unique reference number	124468
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10037897

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 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	845
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Mellor
Headteacher	Michael Burrowes
Telephone number	01543 502 215
Website	www.cardinalgriffin.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@cardinalgriffin.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2013

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The number supported by an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- Nine out of 10 pupils are of White British heritage. There are few from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language.

- Some sixth-form courses are provided in partnership with Cannock Chase High School.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and age groups, and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of governors' meetings, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour logs, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and groups of pupils in key stage 3, key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- Inspectors took account of 56 responses to Parent View and the responses to the school's own parent survey. They also took into consideration responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Tomes	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Quigley	Ofsted Inspector
David Buckle	Ofsted Inspector

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