

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Honeysgreen Lane, Liverpool L12 9HZ

Inspection dates	13–14 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and learners

This is a school that requires improvement

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is not improving swiftly enough, particularly in mathematics and science. Success is inconsistent between subjects.
- Not enough pupils are making good progress in mathematics and science. Their rates of progress lag behind those found nationally.
- Some teaching is not yet consistently strong, nor does it ignite a love for learning.
- The teaching of mathematics does not always allow pupils to deepen their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Opportunities to develop numeracy across the curriculum are weak and this hinders the development of pupils' mathematical skills.
- New appointments have strengthened teaching and leadership. However, these have not been in place long enough to have brought about significant change in outcomes.
- Pupils are not regularly encouraged to read widely and often in subjects other than English. Leaders do not instil a culture of wider reading across the school. Reading is not monitored and evaluated effectively to support the needs of the weakest pupils in the school.
- Although attendance figures are improving, there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent from school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong leadership to the school. Newly appointed senior leaders have strengthened the school's capacity to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- The leadership of teaching is good. The quality of teaching is improving quickly; professional development is a strong feature of the school.
- Progress in modern foreign languages is outstanding.
- Teachers build strong relationships with pupils to aid learning.
- Learners in the sixth form achieve well and the provision is very well led and managed.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils have an excellent understanding of British values and the nature of life in modern Britain.
- The school provides good care and support to pupils. It works effectively with other services to keep vulnerable pupils safe.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers guidance and advice.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' progress and attainment further, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils studying mathematics and science, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - ensuring that opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills are planned for in relevant subjects across the curriculum
 - providing more teaching that fosters pupils' love for learning
 - ensuring that teachers check pupils' understanding more effectively during lessons to help plan new learning.
- Develop a stronger reading culture across the school that nurtures a love of reading and enhances pupils' fluency and comprehension skills by:
 - ensuring that the special educational needs coordinator works closely with English and literacy leaders to effectively meet the needs of all of those pupils whose reading is weak
 - ensuring that all curriculum areas positively contribute to raising the profile of reading across the school
 - ensuring that senior leaders monitor and evaluate the strategies used to develop reading across the school.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has taken a resolute and firm lead in driving strong and decisive action across the school to address areas for improvement. She is bold, leads by example and articulates a clear vision to the school community. Staff and pupils hold the headteacher in high regard.
- There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. The headteacher and new senior leadership team are driven in their quest to provide high-quality teaching and learning for all pupils in their care. The leadership team members are determined, knowledgeable and united in their approach and are leading change that is having a positive impact.
- The newly appointed leadership team has put in place robust systems and routines that have led to improvements in pupils' attainment and progress. The school's capacity to improve is good. Senior leaders are effective and determined to make a difference to pupils' lives. They work hard with pupils and their families to remove barriers to learning.
- The new leaders of mathematics and science are motivating their teams of teachers to make improvements. There is now better capacity to improve outcomes for pupils in these subjects. All middle leaders work closely with senior leaders to review pupils' achievement and hold staff swiftly to account for the quality of their work. Middle leaders share senior leaders' uncompromising approach in driving the school towards excellence.
- Staff are positive about the school; they recognise the swift improvements to systems and the strength in leadership. Staff receive appropriate professional development and training opportunities to improve teaching. For example, the use of lead teachers to share good practice among staff is well established, and a coaching programme is undertaken to strengthen and develop other identified staff. Teachers benefit from effective training; consequently, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have sought out, and worked with, a range of effective external support. The plethora of other school support partnerships is improving teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes.
- School leaders at all levels check the quality of teaching frequently; new systems are now much more rigorous. School leaders and teachers use school assessment information effectively to identify where pupils will benefit from additional support. Additional support is tracked and monitored closely by all stakeholders. Senior leaders are linked to all subject areas and regularly review all aspects of work. They undertake subject reviews which accurately identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.
- Newly qualified teachers and trainees are provided with high-quality support from leaders.
- Heads of year and progress leaders ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. Progress leaders and heads of year fuse academic and pastoral information by monitoring academic performance as well as forging relationships with pupils and families. Information is regularly gathered to track pupils' performance and to intervene with effective support plans, personalised for the 'whole child'.
- The curriculum has been reviewed and improved. Leaders ensure that the curriculum on offer is broad and balanced, enriched with spiritual, moral and social opportunities.
- The school provides its pupils with good careers guidance and advice that helps them to make informed choices about their next steps. For example, all pupils in Year 10 experience an appropriate work placement. Good connections are made with local providers for apprenticeships and a well-established careers fair further supports pupils' career choice routes. Transition from each key stage is well supported with clear steps communicated well to parents. Very few pupils leave school without entering further education, employment or training.
- Parents are generally positive about the school, and communication links between parents and staff are well established. Information sent home to parents about their child's targets and progress is clear and easy to understand.
- The local authority provides good support and challenge to the school by investing time and resources to secure improvements. The local authority is knowledgeable about the school's strengths and has been diligent in driving improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has been reconstituted and reviewed since the last inspection. Governors have an

improved understanding of school systems and are now better equipped to challenge and support the school.

- The governing body is committed to raising pupils’ achievement. Governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and of what the information about pupils’ attainment and progress shows about the school’s performance. They cross-check this information to ensure its accuracy.
- Governors are active and challenging, both supporting the school and holding it to account. They ask questions about the school’s progress information and the quality of teaching, to make sure actions taken are effective. They consider spending decisions carefully.
- Governors know how the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are spent. They monitor whether the premium is being used to narrow progress gaps between the school’s disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. They recognise that the impact of pupil premium spending is not yet strong enough.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are fully committed to improving pupils’ performance further.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved considerably and is now good. Teachers give pupils good information on how well they are doing and most pupils enjoy their learning.
- Leaders have strengthened the curriculum with improved assessments and checking of the standards that pupils achieve in their work. Consequently, teachers’ assessments of pupils’ understanding and knowledge are now more reliable and accurate. Staff now plan collaboratively and most subject leaders liaise with other schools for checks and validation.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils spoken to during the inspection expressed high regard and great loyalty towards their teachers.
- Most teachers show good subject knowledge. They have high expectations and show enthusiasm for their subjects. Some teaching regularly secures pupils’ interest in the activities provided, extends their knowledge and increases their understanding. Teachers know their pupils well as individuals and use a range of strategies to keep motivation high. Homework is set frequently, logged with an online facility that makes expectations clear for pupils and parents and closely monitored by subject leaders.
- Teachers establish an environment where pupils want to learn and feel comfortable to ask questions and to offer their thoughts and ideas. Many teachers are highly skilled in probing and questioning pupils to establish their understanding. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent.
- The quality of teaching is securely improving across the school; pockets of excellent practice are developing in religious education, history, English, information communication technology and modern foreign languages. Teachers’ questioning is strong and supports pupils’ progress.
- Teachers’ feedback and guidance are generally effective in helping pupils to improve their work. Pupils receive particularly helpful advice in English, history and modern foreign languages.
- The school makes good and appropriate use of alternative provision within and beyond the building. The internal alternative provision ‘reflection room’ is a calm supportive environment which supports learning well.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils’ understanding before moving on to new learning. Consequently, pupils’ progress slows and they do not reach their potential in all subjects.
- The majority of teachers develop, consolidate and deepen pupils’ knowledge and understanding. Deficits are known and leaders at all levels are taking a proactive approach. However, deficits in reading fluency and comprehension are not successfully addressed consistently by teachers.
- A love and culture of reading does not prevail throughout the school; it is not promoted well by subject leaders or teachers beyond English. Pupils cannot easily access a wide variety of books. There is no school library.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. However, opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills are still in their infancy.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in numeracy are not planned well in relevant subjects across the curriculum.
- Strong teaching has not been established over a sufficient time to secure good progress and attainment

in science and mathematics. The school has struggled to provide permanent high-quality teaching in these subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school makes very good efforts to ensure that the needs of pupils are known prior to their arrival at the school. Information is provided to teachers sensitively and additional support for the most vulnerable is well organised. For example, a summer school builds pupils' confidence and familiarises pupils with school structures and systems.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through lessons, tutorials and assemblies. Those who met with the inspectors and those that completed the online survey said that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils are taught strong messages about the impact of bullying; derogatory language and homophobic bullying are rare and not tolerated by the school.
- The school pays particular attention to the emotional well-being of pupils; a trained counsellor is employed to provide specialist additional support.
- Rewards are used effectively to motivate pupils to work hard and behave well. Pupils reported that they enjoyed their celebratory hot chocolate with the headteacher as a reward. Many pupils spoke about the 'class chart' system used to reward good attendance, behaviour, attitudes and achievement. The reduction in fixed-term exclusions continues year on year. Care is taken to record and report unacceptable behaviour and keep parents and carers informed.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Pupils are given roles of responsibility as the result of a democratic process. Pupils undertake a variety of responsibilities, including head boy, pupil council representatives, anti-bullying representatives and sports leaders; staff are keen to develop future leaders of society. The school council has been instrumental in reshaping the personal, social and health education curriculum and leading an assembly on British values and extremism.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are very strong. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and are well trained, including on the school's duty to safeguard pupils who may be at risk of exposure to extremism. The school is highly vigilant in identifying those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to harm.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good; there is a positive climate for learning in most lessons due to the strong relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. There is a strong emphasis on respect that permeates the school. Pupils show respect for one another and take good care of the school's buildings and grounds.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a more focused approach to promoting good attendance in school and work with parents is increasingly effective. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school, while reducing, is still higher than the national level.
- Pupils are respectful and courteous to one another and to adults. Relationships between pupils and with staff are highly positive. Pupils wear their uniforms with pride; they appear well organised, ready to learn and responsive to requests from adults. Work in pupils' books shows that the majority take a pride in their work and usually present it neatly and carefully.
- The overwhelming majority of both staff and parents believe that behaviour is managed well across the school. Teachers and support staff follow the robust systems and policies set in place by leaders. As a result of clear systems, pupils' behaviour has continued to improve since the last inspection. The work undertaken in the 'reflection centre' is having a positive impact on improving behaviour; very few pupils are excluded from lessons due to poor behaviour.
- Most pupils attending off-site courses have good levels of behaviour and attendance. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they make good progress in their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- There is not a consistent trend of overall improvement. Despite overall progress and attainment showing some improvement in 2015, too few pupils made the expected progress in mathematics and the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE qualifications at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, although improved, was still below national figures. Pupils' achievement in science was poor: it was well below national figures. Attainment and progress in mathematics and science are showing signs of improvement but these are not swift enough to secure good achievement for pupils who will take their GCSE examinations in summer 2016.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is mixed. Gaps between pupils' achievement and that of others in the school vary widely across year groups and specific cohort groups. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils achieved two thirds of a grade less than other pupils in English and nearly a grade less than others in mathematics compared to pupils nationally.
- Those pupils entering the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills do not receive well-structured and coordinated support to enable them to effectively improve their reading and numeracy skills swiftly enough. The reading recovery programmes are not effective in developing pupils' wider reading and enjoyment. Consequently, pupils do not build strong foundations for future success.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make variable progress. In 2015, this group attained poorly in English, mathematics and humanities subjects. They are now making improved progress.
- New appointments across the school have strengthened teaching and learning. Staff changes to middle and senior leadership, combined with a stronger emphasis on improving teachers' classroom skills, have started the green shoots of improvement. Leaders are resolute in driving improvements. However, these changes have not been in place long enough to secure significant impact on pupils' outcomes, particularly in mathematics and science and for disadvantaged pupils.
- In Key Stage 3 the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress are in line with those found nationally. Rates of progress are beginning to improve in mathematics. The school works hard to improve pupils' learning. Consequently, more pupils in Years 7 to 9 are now on track to making better progress from their relative starting points.
- Staff have a good level of awareness of the needs of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school. Senior leaders ensure that all teachers monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils closely and intervene should any underachievement be apparent. A wide range of personalised support is accessible for these pupils. Support programmes for all pupils are well designed and increasingly effective. Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 because they have received more consistently good-quality teaching over time.
- Achievement for the most able in 2015 was low; however, the school's information for the most-able pupils currently on roll shows some improvements.
- Achievements in modern foreign languages are consistently stronger than national due to the clear leadership and delivery of high-quality teaching.
- Good careers advice is provided and this is reflected in the number of pupils gaining university places and in the number who go on to employment or training. Advice and guidance processes for pupils making study choices for GCSE are very thorough and lead to there being very few pathway changes because pupils are on appropriate courses. The school is committed to developing pupils' understanding of the world of work. All pupils are encouraged to take part in quality work experience during Year 10 and also in Year 12. This helps them to develop awareness of the skills they need to be active citizens in modern Britain. Commitment to work experience is strong and runs alongside well-structured impartial careers advice to support pupils' next steps.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The sixth form centre is a purposeful learning environment which provides a good education for learners. Learners enjoy their studies and say they are proud to be part of the school community. Learners told inspectors that they feel safe and valued; attendance is good.
- The sixth form is caring, well led and effectively managed. Improvements in school outcomes have led to a recent growth in the sixth form. Since the previous inspection, the school has raised the profile of

academic courses and reduced the programme of vocational courses. Although the sixth form is relatively small, most learners are able to study their preferred combination of options; small groups share their learning in the sixth form building with Broughton Hall High School for Girls.

- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Leaders are ambitious for learners to do well and have a clear plan for improvement. They have robust systems to track and monitor learners and provide swift support when required.
- Learners are prepared well for future employment and higher education through access to a wide variety of external scholar programmes offered by universities and external companies. All learners have access to good impartial careers advice, which helps them to plan effectively for their futures. Virtually all learners progress to university, employment or training. The vast majority have high aspirations, and increasing proportions go on to study at the most prestigious universities. The proportions of learners who stay on in the sixth form are increasing and the retention rate has improved because learners are accepted onto appropriate courses.
- The quality of teaching and learning in both work-related and academic subjects is good. Teachers plan learning with a clear purpose and use their strong subject knowledge to engage and challenge learners so they make good progress. Discussions are expertly led by sixth form teachers to develop knowledge and inspire a curiosity for learning. Learners respond well to teachers' questions, and provide thoughtful responses that demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Learners make good progress towards their targets, and outcomes in 2016 are on track to be even higher than in 2015. Study periods are well organised and supervised to improve success. Disadvantaged learners outperform non-disadvantaged in average points per entry. Very few learners join the sixth form without having gained at least GCSE grade C passes in English and mathematics. Those learners who retake these examinations are becoming increasingly successful in attaining a GCSE grade or above.
- Learners' progress in developing their personal, social and employability skills is good due to the school's provision of a formal curriculum and non-qualification activity and work experience. Every learner has a personal adviser who provides them with tailored support.
- Sixth form learners speak very positively about their community, experiences and developments. Leaders provide strong pastoral care and focus upon employability skills as part of post-16 study programmes.
- Learners appreciate the wide variety of enrichment programmes available which extend their leadership skills and widen their life experiences. For example, all learners can access first-aid courses, work experience and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme. Some learners run additional clubs for younger pupils in the school. The sixth form council provides good leadership development and ensures learners have a voice and an active role in the school community.

School details

Unique reference number	104714
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10002225
This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of learners	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of learners in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,311
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	153
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	20–21 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average secondary school for boys, voluntary aided under the trusteeship of the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The school sixth form is of an average size and shared with learners from a neighbouring school for girls.
- The vast majority of learners are White British. The proportion of learners whose first language is not English is well below national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above national average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is almost twice the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils are educated off site at a range of providers: Alder Centre for Education, Cornerstone Training Centre, Central Schools Training, Everton Free School, Shorefields SSC, Fazakerley High School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in most subjects and all year groups, including two lesson observations that were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors viewed registration periods, an assembly and made visits to the school's internal inclusion unit.
- Meetings and formal discussions took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, groups of staff, middle leaders and an officer from the local authority. Inspectors also spoke by telephone with members of staff from all external educational providers.
- Meetings were held with teachers who are newly qualified and those undertaking training at the school.
- Inspectors formally interviewed three groups of pupils as well as the school council and sixth form council. Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils informally at break and lunchtime and observed learners' conduct and behaviour throughout the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books in all lessons observed during the inspection.
- During the inspection, detailed consideration was given to policies and practices relating to child protection and safeguarding alongside how the school prepares its pupils for life in modern Britain. Inspectors scrutinised a range of supporting documentation in regard to self-evaluation, monitoring information and improvement plans, minutes of governors' meetings, performance management, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and progress information relating to pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors took account of the 103 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the responses to the staff and learners' online questionnaires.

Inspection team

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Marcia Harding	Ofsted Inspector
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