

Cardinal Pole Roman Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100285
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	354830
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Liz Duffy

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1007
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Christopher Grace
Headteacher	Ms Katherine Hartigan
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 January 2008
School address	Kenworthy Road Homerton London E9 5RB
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 30 lessons taught by 30 teachers covering the full age and ability range. Meetings were held with the staff, governors and students. The inspectors looked at a wide range of data and documentation, including the school improvement plan, school policies, assessment data and minutes of governing body meetings. The responses to questionnaires completed by staff, students and 91 parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How high is the attainment and progress of all students?
- What is the quality of teaching and how well do teachers use assessment and marking?
- How effective are leaders in driving and securing improvement?

Information about the school

Cardinal Pole Roman Catholic School is an average sized comprehensive school with a small sixth form. A large majority of students are of Black Caribbean or Black African heritage. Almost half of the student population speaks English as an additional language. Most students are fluent speakers with a few who are in the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is in line with the national average. The upper school, Years 9 to 11, is based at the site on Kenworthy Road and the lower school, Years 7 and 8, is based at the site on Victoria Park Road. The school is moving to a single new building in 2012. The school has recently received the Healthy Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Students receive a satisfactory education at Cardinal Pole Roman Catholic School. Attainment dipped in 2010 and particularly so in science, which affected the overall performance of the school. Attainment is below the national average. The majority of students enter the school with attainment which is below the national average but make at least satisfactory progress in most subjects and exceptional progress in English. Students who enter Year 7 with special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress in literacy due to the highly effective support they receive. Overall, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The headteacher and the leadership team are focused upon improving the achievement of students, as well as the curriculum provision for students, which at present are satisfactory. Leadership recognises that there is still work to do in order to strengthen the use of school assessment and data systems in order to provide academic support and teaching more suited to students' needs. The quality of marking is variable throughout the school. Evaluation and strategic planning are areas for improvement in the sixth form. A reorganisation of the science department, a broadening of access to science courses and a sharper focus upon the quality of teaching are starting to have impact. The improvements brought about by these initiatives, together with the recent improvements in attendance, which is now above average, and the improving academic performance of students of Black African heritage, demonstrate that the school has a sound capacity to sustain improvement. School self-evaluation is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. In the best lessons teachers let students talk in pairs or groups to reinforce understanding, provide a range of tasks for students according to their needs and enthuse the students with their passion for their subject. In the less effective lessons the pace slows, expectations of what students can achieve in the time given are low and the same work is given to all students regardless of their ability.

'Energising abilities' is the school's motto and this is reflected in the energetic approach of the school's staff who succeed in providing a safe and caring environment for their students. One student commented: 'School is a safe place, outside isn't, but all that is left behind at the school gate.' Cardinal Pole students are confident and happy with their school. They appreciate that their well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Provision in this area is good. Key strengths are students' spiritual awareness and their celebration of the cultural diversity that is represented in the school. A high exclusion rate is a product of staff's insistence on high levels of

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safety and high expectations of behaviour in a school with a local context which has its challenges. Although some exemplary behaviour was seen during the inspection, not all students meet this ideal. However, behaviour overall is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of data and assessment in order to ensure:
 - lesson activities are matched to the needs of all students
 - greater consistency in the quality of marking
 - sharper tracking of progress
 - a clearer overview of attainment and progress.
- Reduce the variability of teaching quality so that all groups of students make expected if not better progress.
- Build on the current improvement programme in science to raise achievement by:
 - higher expectations in lessons
 - improving the quality of learning
 - ensuring appropriate access to courses and opportunities to extend learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Low results in science and the below average performance of a challenging group of students of Black African heritage across some subjects led to a fall in attainment in 2010. Attainment was below average compared to the previous year, which was in line. Performance in science is improving with the current Year 10 making rapid progress with the new specification which has been introduced. Timely intervention in the upper school has ensured that students of Black African heritage are now progressing in line with their peers. The few students who are in the early stages of learning English make good progress. Further evidence of improvement in 2011 is supported by lesson observation. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities perform in line with their peers. Overall, students make satisfactory progress.

The students confirm that they feel safe in and around the school and that any

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incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with effectively. Where students are engaged in lessons and enjoy their learning, behaviour is good. In the less effective lessons, students are easily distracted by their peers. The school is working hard to improve the satisfactory behaviour in the cramped corridors of the upper school. Exclusions have remained high over time. Students benefit from a range of healthy food in the canteen and numbers participating in sporting activities are high. Students' contribution to the school and wider community is satisfactory. The School Council is in its early stages of development and the split site makes it difficult for older students to contribute to the learning of the younger students. Limitations with leadership roles and a satisfactory understanding by students of the opportunities available to them result in satisfactory development of workplace and other skills, which in turn contribute to students' future economic well-being.

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Key strengths in this area are students' appreciation of the different ethnic backgrounds represented in the community and their ability to embrace new experiences which broaden their understanding. Due to the nature of the exclusions some students do not demonstrate the moral values advocated by the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Overall teaching is satisfactory but there is much variability in quality. During the time of the inspection an outstanding art lesson used self- and peer-assessment effectively and in the good lessons observed students enjoyed good relationships

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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with their teachers and benefited from the opportunity to exchange ideas. In these lessons there was a good pace to the learning due to considered planning. In the less effective lessons the pace slows, there is extensive use of teacher-talk and students are not challenged appropriately for their abilities. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good support provided by the learning support assistants. Students know their targets and their next steps for improvement but written guidance in exercise books is not always precise enough to be helpful.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are a variety of pathways for students in the upper school and the limited access to appropriate science courses is being addressed. The curriculum in the lower school lacks imaginative and effective opportunities for learning; for example, personal learning and thinking skills have not been developed through the curriculum. Extra-curricular provision is strong. During the inspection gifted students in English enjoyed a poetry morning in the library with an outside speaker. ‘Poetry is how writers sing without singing’ and ‘Poetry is a weapon’ (comments from students) demonstrate that such opportunities can contribute to deeper thinking if used effectively.

Excellent individual attention and care are given to students. There are striking examples of where the school has helped vulnerable students to overcome their difficulties. The heads of learning do much to ensure the reintegration of students who are removed from lessons. Less effective is the academic support to improve achievement and the transition arrangements from lower school to upper school. Overall, care, guidance and support are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is recovering from a shortage of staffing and leadership in science. Curriculum management is stronger in some subjects than others but evaluation of the quality of lessons and of students’ work is improving. Inspectors endorse senior leaders’ views that the current data and tracking system needs improvement. In particular, a more accurate model for tracking progression in the lower school is a priority. There has been insufficient training for individual members of teaching staff in interpreting data and using assessments to inform the planning of lessons.

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The school enjoys a good relationship with parents and carers and has a very clear understanding of its own religious heritage within the local community. It makes a good contribution to community cohesion and good use of its international links. For example, the school has developed links with schools in Rome, Israel and Argentina and is involved with a community project in South Africa. Partnerships set up at the time of gaining specialist status in science are still in place with primary schools, Imperial College and with an Italian school but partnerships are not as well developed to support work-related learning. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory but improving. Equality of access to certain courses in the upper school, for example, is being addressed and the school makes every effort to tackle any potential discrimination based on race.

Governors are very supportive of the school and monitor its performance appropriately. There are effective procedures for safeguarding students and risk assessment; records are comprehensive and staff have been appropriately trained. Financial management is secure and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Outcomes in the sixth form are good and attainment is in line with national averages. Students make good progress across most of their subjects. Progress is particularly high in the vocational courses. Students make the least progress in chemistry, geography and physics. The previous inspection recommendation of improving independent learning has been addressed, with greater availability of online resources and guidance through the school’s virtual learning environment.

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The impact of good teaching is evident through the sixth form. Good lessons (which are in the majority) delivered in the sixth form are characterised by strong subject knowledge, high expectations, close reference to examination grade criteria, probing questioning and a positive learning ethos. Less effective lessons do not reinforce key ideas and the connecting of ideas is usually made by the teacher. The curriculum broadly matches the abilities of the students but does not cater for all needs and aspirations. For example, there is limited choice for practical subjects; physical education and design and technology are not available and provision for gifted and talented students is narrow. This aspect of provision is therefore only satisfactory.

Students are very happy and value the close contact they have with their tutors. Care, guidance and support are good overall but contact with younger learners to develop their leadership and mentoring skills is not sufficiently well developed. Leadership and management are only satisfactory because the school does not use the data it has about the sixth form well enough to inform strategic planning. Evaluation of teaching and learning in the sixth form by sixth form leaders is also less perceptive than it needs to be if it is to maximise students’ opportunities to progress successfully to higher education or employment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The Ofsted questionnaire was returned by a very small minority of parents and carers. Of those that responded, most parents and carers felt that their children were making enough progress, that the school deals effectively with behaviour and that their children were happy at school. Parents and carers confirmed that their children felt safe and the school helped their children to have a healthy lifestyle. A small minority of parents and carers who responded would like more support with their children’s learning and for the school to take more account of parents’ and carers’ suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cardinal Pole Roman Catholic School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1007 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	22	57	63	7	8	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	29	32	54	59	4	4	2	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	34	37	45	49	9	10	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	26	55	60	7	8	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	23	25	54	59	7	8	2	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	20	22	49	54	17	19	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	14	57	63	16	18	3	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	26	57	63	5	5	2	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	18	61	67	10	11	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	22	58	64	6	7	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	16	52	57	19	21	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	23	25	56	62	7	8	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	33	49	54	6	7	3	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Cardinal Pole Roman Catholic School, Hackney, E9 5RB

On behalf of the inspection team, I am writing to thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently and to tell you about our findings during the inspection. We concluded that your school provides a satisfactory level of education. Examination results are low in comparison with national standards but some of you are rapidly improving in your performance. Some aspects of your school are good, for example the care and support you receive from your teachers. We saw plenty of you enjoying your lessons and we were pleased to hear that you are happy at school.

Your headteacher has plans to improve the school further. We identified three things that should help her with this:

- improve the use of assessment so that lesson activities are matched more closely to your needs.
- reduce the variability of the quality of teaching so that you all make expected or better progress in all of your lessons.
- raise achievement in science.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Liz Duffy
Lead inspector

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