

Questions and Answers

Where are you located?

We are easily accessible from the foot of the Kingsway Bridge off the A50. If you look at the photograph you will see we are surrounded by open land in a loop on the banks of the River Mersey.

Where do your pupils come from?

Like all Catholic schools we take pupils from a very wide area. We take children from the parishes of Our Lady, St Augustine, St Benedict, St Bridget, St Mary, St Monica, St Oswald, St Peter and St Stephen and St Winifride. We also welcome children from other faith backgrounds and none. In recent years we have gladly admitted pupils from Eastern Europe, the Philippines and Cambodia. 85% of our pupils come to school on one of our many school buses.

What makes your school special?

First and foremost we are a Catholic school and our principle aim is to raise standards and give 'life chances' to children of all abilities and all backgrounds, developing each and every child fully by offering effective teaching and learning.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in October 2006. The inspector judged us to be "a good school which has much to be proud of and an exciting future to look forward"; he also noted that "there is a real family feel to the school".

How big are your class sizes?

We pride ourselves on being a smaller than average school. We have chosen to limit the school to a maximum of 750 so that we can keep class sizes to approximately 28.

What are the benefits of this?

The staff know all children really well. We are able to identify their potential and monitor their progress very closely. Equally important, we are able to develop them as individuals and encourage the values at the heart of the school.

How do you arrange your teaching groups?

Children are placed in sets according to their ability so that they can be appropriately challenged to help them meet their potential. We identify pupils' potential via a range of national standardised tests in Years 7 and 9. We review progress every term.

How well do your results compare with other schools in the area?

The progress made by our children from KS2 – KS3 in recent years has placed us in the top 8% of schools nationally and often the highest achieving school in Warrington.

The progress made by our children from KS2 – KS4 placed us in the top 11% of schools nationally. We were also congratulated by the Department for Education and Skills for being one of the top 100 most improved schools in the country.

How were your GCSE results last year?

70% achieved 5 or more A*-C passes; 56% including both English and Mathematics.

	5 + A*-C	Inc English & Maths
Cardinal Newman	70%	56%
Warrington LA	70%	53%
National	66%	Not available

Most of our pupils achieve 10 or more good GCSE grades, many achieving 12 or more.

What provisions are made for gifted and talented children?

Pupils with exceptional gifts and talents are encouraged to pursue them to high standards. A number of our pupils are members of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (G&t). Every department has provision for G&T pupils and there is a member of staff who co-ordinates whole school provision.

There is an ‘Express’ set in Mathematics who take their GCSE early and the school provides them with the opportunity to study A2 level.

What provisions are made for children with special educational needs?

The Special Needs and Social Inclusion departments provide in-class or one-to-one support for pupils with a variety of needs. The school provides support for pupils who have English as an additional language. Gifted and talented pupils also benefit from a range of enrichment and extension activities. The introduction of a vocational GCSE in partnership with Priestley College provides a work-related option for pupils who prefer a more vocational route.

The recent Ofsted inspection concluded that our children “receive good care, guidance, support and advice for individual needs”. In accordance with legislation, reasonable adjustments are made where applicable.

How are parents informed about their child's progress?

All children receive a detailed report every year and we also have Parents' Evenings to discuss progress. On a daily basis teachers will keep in touch with you in the same way.

All pupils' work is given a progress grade so that it is clear to all how well a child is progressing.

How do you know what your children are capable of achieving?

We identify pupil's potential with a range of national standardised tests. We are therefore quickly able to identify any pupil who is underachieving and ensure appropriate support is put in place to enable them to achieve in line with their potential.

We have an established system of targeting pupils at risk in all years with individual tutor mentoring and have recently extended intervention strategies into KS4. The results show how successful this has been.

What about discipline?

We want our children to look forward to coming to school. They need to feel safe and secure so we will not tolerate any behaviour which disrupts their learning or general well-being. We operate a consistent Code of Conduct based upon self-discipline and we will not hesitate to apply the strongest sanctions to maintain good order and a purposeful atmosphere.

Ofsted commented that our children "are well behaved in class and most are becoming personable and responsible young people who have a good sense of right and wrong". The Diocesan inspectors judged our effective pastoral system to be "outstanding".

How do you deal with bullying?

We have a strict anti-bullying policy which encourages pupils to speak up if they feel that they or others are being bullied. The Ofsted inspectors commented that "incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with promptly". We do not tolerate any level of bullying and are prepared to exclude pupils if necessary.

Do you think homework is important?

Yes we do. We have a homework timetable with a minimum of two subjects per night. Children are expected to spend 30 minutes on each subject. As they move through the school homework demands are increased.

We expect parents to support us in this by checking their child's homework diary every night and signing it once a week.

