

De Lisle Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number Local Authority Inspection number Inspection dates Reporting inspector 120304 Leicestershire 379994 28–29 September 2011 Nada Trikic HMI

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1373
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Murphy
Headteacher	Chris Davies
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
School address	Thorpe Hill
	Loughborough
	LE11 4SQ
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 Age group
 11–18

 Inspection date(s)
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 39 lessons and 39 teachers including nine joint observations with members of the senior leadership team, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including: improvement plans, the analysis and tracking of students' progress, records of classroom observation, attendance data and monitoring information. They analysed and considered 150 student, 59 staff and 77 parent and carer questionnaires.

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

- How effectively do leaders, including the governing body, use performance indicators and lesson observation findings to evaluate the learning and progress of different groups of learners?
- How well are the needs of higher-ability students met through teachers' lesson planning and delivery?
- Are accountability and improvement planning sufficiently robust across the school to strengthen outcomes across subjects and groups of learners?
- Is the information used to monitor sixth form attainment and progress sufficiently robust to drive improvement?

Information about the school

De Lisle Catholic School is a larger than average comprehensive school. The admissions policy gives priority to students of the Catholic faith from primary schools across North Leicestershire. Most of the school population is from White British backgrounds with a small proportion from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion identified by the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

De Lisle has specialist status for science and applied learning. The school holds a number of awards including the National Healthy School status, Artsmark, International School Award and Investors in People.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Main findings

De Lisle Catholic School is satisfactory. It is a developing school with a good sixth form. A significant strength of the school is the strong community spirit. This is shown in friendly and respectful relationships between students and staff, and high rates of attendance. Provision for students' personal development and well-being is outstanding. The school is an inclusive, harmonious and cohesive community, which is highly valued by parents, carers, students and staff. Staff are successful in creating an exceptionally safe and vibrant learning environment. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and permeates all aspects of the school's work. Students are proud of their school and value the highquality care and guidance they receive. They are enthusiastic about their school experiences and relish the opportunity to take responsibility, as prefects or peer mentors, or by leading sporting events and reflective activities in the house system.

High standards have been sustained in recent years, although this disguises inconsistency between subjects and groups of learners. Variation is evident in the proportion of students to gain the top A* and A grades, and A* to C grades across GCSE subjects. In 2010, there was an increase to 76% in the proportion of students to gain five or more higher-grade GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. This year the figure was 67%, below the school's target. This lower performance resulted from weaknesses in the tracking of students' progress and coordination across subjects. Such variation means that students make satisfactory progress from their above average starting points.

Significant changes in the roles of the extended leadership team have slowed the pace of improvement in recent years. Systems for progress tracking and monitoring the work of the school are developing well, but are not sufficiently embedded to demonstrate consistent impact. Targets have been raised to increase the level of challenge, with more frequent checks to identify students falling behind. This means that intervention strategies such as '1-to-1' sessions and additional study support can now be programmed in a timely manner. New procedures to share targets with parents and carers and to involve tutors more effectively in monitoring academic progress have been well received.

Teaching, which is satisfactory overall, makes a variable contribution to students' learning and progress. Students benefit from much good teaching, but the proportion of it is not high enough. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan a wide range of activities to interest and engage students. Too often, assessment

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information is not used well enough to plan and adjust lessons to meet the diverse needs of learners. Opportunities are often missed to involve students in assessing their own work so they are clear about the progress they are making. High-ability students are not routinely challenged and the individual needs of those students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always considered in teachers' planning of work and lessons. Students display extremely positive attitudes to learning. They respond well to high expectations, and appreciate the opportunity to work independently, and to express their views. The curriculum makes a good contribution to students' high attainment through a wide range of courses and effective partnerships with local providers that extend subject choice.

Senior leaders have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, although there is a tendency to be overgenerous in their evaluation of its performance. This is because performance and monitoring information are not systematically gathered and interrogated fully to substantiate judgements. Improvements to procedures for tracking and analysing students' performance are beginning to provide detail about the performance of different groups of learners. A high priority is set for developing the quality of teaching supported by a regular programme of lesson observations and training. Leaders have, appropriately, revised procedures to strengthen the evaluation of lessons. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory – and improving. The headteacher has worked systematically to build capacity across the new leadership and management team to sharpen roles and responsibilities with a stronger focus on student achievement. This is supported by the shared commitment of staff to raise achievement, students' motivation to succeed, and the positive support of parents and carers.

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 rates of progress, and consistency across courses through:
 - effective use of prior attainment information to plan schemes of work to meet the diverse needs of learners
 - regular checks on standards and progress against explicit milestones for individuals and groups of learners
 - an increase in the proportion of A* and A grades
 - clear lines of accountability for student progress.
- Increase the proportion of securely good or better teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons, tasks and resources that take account of students' prior attainment, progress information and individual learning needs
 - involve students in assessing their progress so they are clear about their

next steps in learning

- check students' learning regularly during lessons so plans can be adjusted as necessary.
- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and accountability between senior and middle leaders, and the rest of the staff so that:
 - monitoring of teaching and learning is robust and leads to personalised professional development to enhance teaching skills, and the sharing of best practice
 - priorities are translated into effective plans with explicit indicators to measure progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Attainment on entry to the school is above average. By the end of Year 11, standards remain high, although some groups of learners make more progress than others. Middle-ability girls do less well than expected and too few high-ability students gain the top A*and A GCSE grades. Students known to be eligible for free school meals have been less successful in gaining five or more GCSE higher grades, including English and mathematics. The learning and progress of students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. They make good progress when their individual needs are considered to support progression in their learning. The school is now better placed to respond to these inequalities.

Evidence from students' work seen during the inspection indicates that classes are making at least satisfactory progress. Students respond well when expectations are high and they are challenged by tasks that help them to develop and apply their knowledge and understanding. Where learning is less effective, tasks do not adequately meet the needs of different groups of learners to ensure rapid progress. Typically the same task is set for all students. When given the opportunity, students are articulate and enjoy discussing their learning. Learning is not routinely checked to identify students who need further explanation or consolidation before moving on. On other occasions, more-able students are not provided with opportunities to learn at a faster rate.

Other features of student outcomes include the following:

- Students feel, very strongly, that the school provides a safe and secure learning environment and express confidence that any concerns will be taken seriously.
- Students treat each other and adults with respect, and are able to show empathy and sensitivity to those less fortunate than themselves, as seen in their care for others, and charity work.
- Students have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and an awareness of health risks associated with smoking, drugs and alcohol. Large numbers of students participate enthusiastically in sporting activities.
- Students' behaviour is good; they are polite, considerate and courteous.

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Students have an exceptional understanding of spirituality and a welldeveloped understanding of moral, social and cultural issues. They readily share their experience during opportunities for reflection.

These are the grades for pupils' ou	utcomes
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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	-
Pupils' attendance ¹	L
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

There are examples of good and outstanding teaching which excite, support and challenge students, but this is not consistent across the school. The learning needs of individual students are not always identified and used to ensure lessons have appropriate challenge. Teachers do not routinely use data and their knowledge of students' individual needs to devise effective lesson plans. This means that high-attainers or those students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not always get the most out of lessons. This was not the case in one physical education lesson observed, when the teacher used assessment very effectively to adapt activities to provide a good range of learning opportunities. Time was well managed to allow for regular feedback and a thorough check of progress at the end of the lesson.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes religious education as a core element. Attainment is high in religious education and it makes a strong contribution to students' personal development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education permeates the curriculum with regular opportunities for students to consider and debate issues, and extend their knowledge of the world. The science specialism is a strength of the school. A wide range of courses and activities promote links with

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

other subjects and progression to the sixth form. The curriculum continues to evolve to meet students' needs, such as the addition of Spanish as a second modern foreign language.

The holistic approach founded on the school's values underpins the high-quality provision for care, guidance and support. Very effective systems ensure that attendance is high. Excellent transition links ensure that students settle quickly and get off to a good start. This process is effectively supported by the 'family' atmosphere that pervades, and the friendly welcome and support of older students that contribute strongly to students' personal development and well-being. Information, advice and personal guidance is a strong feature as students make curriculum choices and decisions about the options available. Well-developed partnerships with external agencies for attendance and health provide effective support to meet individual needs.

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	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body, leaders and staff share a strong passion and commitment to improve the life chances of young people. They have been particularly successful in promoting the personal development of students. Safeguarding procedures are effective and the school has robust measures to ensure students' safety. Other aspects of the school's work have progressed at a slower rate, partly through changes in leadership. Appropriate priorities are identified to support improvement. They are not routinely translated into detailed plans to monitor and measure progress against clear indicators. Procedures to monitor student progress and the quality of teaching have not been rigorous enough to secure consistency. The introduction of progress leaders and directors of learning provide a helpful contribution with sharper lines of accountability. The 'living and learning' groups provide a helpful strategy for teachers to share and develop good practice in teaching.

The governing body contributes satisfactorily to the school's development. Members of the governing body bring relevant experience to their duties and take an active role through visits to the school. However, there is insufficient emphasis on evaluating the progress of groups of learners. This is a weaker aspect of the school's work in promoting equality. Equality priorities are not included in improvement plans to ensure a systematic approach. In other respects, the school takes many positive

and successful steps to promote community cohesion, evident in harmonious relationships, and through local, national and international links to celebrate diversity. There are numerous projects to broaden students' horizons. For example, Year 8 students are involved in an online project with young people in Malaysia and Thailand designed to challenge stereotypes, by sharing experiences. The evaluation of these projects is less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement		
Taking into account:	2	
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	2	
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

Students are enthusiastic about their sixth form experiences and this is evident in high retention of students on the courses they begin. Approximately half of the students in the sixth form are involved in mentoring and paired-reading schemes and make an excellent contribution to the school. Results overall are good but some students are missing out on expected top grades in their A levels. More than three quarters of Year 13 leavers go on to higher education, for which students feel well prepared. Teaching in the sixth form is mainly good, characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge. Students learn vital skills of independent learning and collaborative working and these, together with outstanding care, guidance and support, are preparing them well for the next stage in their education. The good curriculum offer is almost exclusively based on academic A levels but the school does its best to ensure that students have opportunities to study some minority subjects at other schools and colleges. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking and assessment across the sixth form, and planning to meet individual needs.

New leadership and management structures in the sixth form have not yet had an impact. Plans for tracking students' progress and intervention where there is

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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

underachievement are robust, but in their infancy. The school makes the most of the cramped and limited accommodation to ensure students have as much opportunity for independent study as possible.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

The number of responses from parents and carers is below average for a secondary school. Parents and carers of Year 7 students did not feel able to respond to all of the questions. The vast majority reported very favourably on their children's enjoyment of school and the extent to which the school provides a safe learning environment. A small minority of parents and carers report that the school does not help them to support their children's learning, or keep them informed of progress. Inspectors found that there are 'family learning' evenings to provide information on different aspects of the curriculum. The introduction of a tutor-review morning has also proven to be popular with parents and carers to review progress. The new assessment system is designed to provide additional information for parents and carers. A very small minority indicated a concern that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection, inspectors were impressed with the behaviour of students. Student discussions revealed that most felt that behaviour was good. Students are aware of the procedures for managing any poor behaviour, which they thought worked well. A small minority of parents and carers report that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that school leaders continue to seek ways to promote engagement through the website and a range of communications. Changes to the parents and carers' forum are also designed to respond more effectively to suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at De Lisle Catholic School Loughborough Leicestershire 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1373 students registered at the school.

Statements Strongly agree			Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	47	37	48	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	35	45	38	49	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	21	41	53	9	12	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	19	46	60	11	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	30	38	49	5	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	13	38	49	19	25	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	25	49	64	3	4	0	0
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	31	38	49	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	18	53	69	5	6	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	25	38	49	11	14	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	16	39	51	11	14	6	8
The school is led and managed effectively	20	26	39	51	7	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	44	31	40	4	5	1	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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:	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.
	 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.

30 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of De Lisle Catholic School Loughborough Leicestershire, Loughborough, LE11 4SQ

Thank you for the friendly welcome when we visited recently. You were all overwhelmingly positive and proud of your school, and enthusiastic about the range of curriculum and enrichment opportunities. We decided that De Lisle is a satisfactory and developing school. It has great strengths in the care and support it provides. Another strength is the great community spirit and the outstanding way that you contribute within the school and local community. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a difference to the running of the school.

You enter the school with standards that are above average. By the end of Year 11 standards are still high but there is variation across courses and not enough of you gain the top A*/A grades. This means that you make satisfactory progress overall. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching which excite, support and challenge you, but this is not consistent. Too often you are asked to complete the same tasks which are not always challenging enough. Systems to check on your progress are developing so that support can be provided if you fall behind. De Lisle has a good sixth form. Students appreciate the good puality advice and guidance, and exceptional care and support. Results are good but some students miss out on the top grades. A wide range of courses is available with good links with other providers to extend choice. Sixth form students make a significant contribution to the school through the mentor and paired-reading schemes.

Over recent years, changes to the school's leadership have slowed progress in some key areas. Staff are working hard to make improvements. At the end of the inspection we identified some points to support the school's next stage:

- improve your rates of progress through better use of assessment information, and regular checks, so that you gain the best possible grades
- increase the proportion of good lessons, planned carefully to challenge you and meet your needs
- carry out regular checks so that priorities can be identified, and plans drawn up to drive improvement, and to share best practice.

My very best wishes for the future. Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic Her Majesty's Inspector



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