

Loreto High School Chorlton

Nell Lane, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester, Lancashire, M21 7SW

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress as a result of good teaching which is generally well matched to their different needs and reflects the school's high expectations.
- Students who enter the school with average or below-average standards make better progress than similar students nationally because of the good level of support they receive.
- Leaders and governors took immediate and uncompromising action to improve the below-average results in English and mathematics in 2012. As a result, students are making much better progress in both subjects and are reaching standards which are close to national levels.
- Leaders and governors have relentlessly driven forward improvements, particularly in raising the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding. This has increased progress and raised achievement. Differences in performance between groups of students have significantly reduced and are on track to reduce even further.
- Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They show positive attitudes to their learning, respect for the Loreto school values, for teachers and for each other. Students show care towards others and feel safe in school.
- Students develop good social skills and confidence through their participation in a wide range of extra activities that help them to integrate well into the life of the school and to develop their talents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across all key stages and subjects.
- Not enough students are doing better than they are expected to when compared to national figures.
- Some teachers do not always ask sufficiently probing questions or make sure that the work is hard enough. Students are not always given opportunities to work by themselves and in groups.
- Attendance is average and the number of students away from school for significant amounts of time is above average and remains above national levels.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 different teachers teach 33 parts of lessons, two of which were observed jointly by inspectors and members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a range of senior and other leaders, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing body, a parent governor and the chair of the governors' committee that oversees the subjects on offer to students and the standards that they achieve. Meetings were held with students from each year group and a telephone call was conducted with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at the school's work, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, the school's information on students' progress and work, documents and case studies relating to behaviour and safeguarding, attendance records and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Geraldine Hutchinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rowland	Additional Inspector
Denah Jones	Additional Inspector
Neil Mackenzie	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized Roman Catholic secondary school and is affiliated to the Loreto International Family of Schools under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Salford.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average and comprises of over half of the students on roll. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from families in the armed services and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above national levels as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- There are high numbers of students who join the school or leave at times other than the usual time at the start of Year 7.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is near to the proportion found nationally. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school makes arrangements for a very small number of students to receive their education in pupil referral units away from the school site in Proctors, Manchester Settlements, Aim Vocation, Ed Start, Manchester Young Lives and Mersey Valley.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move the quality of teaching from good to outstanding, and so raise achievement, by ensuring that:
 - teachers always set work that is hard enough so that students make the progress of which they are capable
 - more teachers use questions which require students to explain their thinking and justify their answers more fully
 - teachers increase opportunities for students to learn by working by themselves and in groups.
- Improve attendance to above average and reduce the numbers of students who are away from school for significant periods of time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the last three years the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C including English and mathematics has risen steadily, although there was a dip in 2012 which had been fully anticipated by the school.
- Current information shows that the number of Year 11 students making the progress expected of them, or doing even better than that, is increasing. The school predicts that in 2013 the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C including English and mathematics will match national figures.
- Changes during 2012-2013 to the students' target setting have ensured a sharper focus on setting higher targets in each subject so that each student works at a higher level to make faster progress. This, together with improvements in the quality of teaching, including more outstanding teaching, and improved use of information about how well students are doing to plan lessons, is having a significant impact on students' learning. Current school information shows that there is a significant increase in progress for all groups of students, in English and mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- The school does not enter students for final GCSE examinations until Year 11, when the school is confident they can reach the highest standard of which they are capable.
- Additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals has increased the progress of this group significantly to above national levels, so that the gap for achievement in English and mathematics between this group and the main body of students in the school has closed.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs benefit from intensive support at an individual level and progress as well as all other students.
- Students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make similarly good progress to that of their classmates.
- In Year 7 students are taught in form groups by a small team of teachers so that they have extra support to settle into the school and can get to know these teachers well. The school also provides extra support for those known to be eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme and these students receive intensive early support to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the progress made by Year 7 students is good. For example, current information shows that between the start of Year 7 and the end of Year 8 the proportion of students making expected progress in English increased from 53% to 80%.
- Skills in reading are further developed for all students by the whole-school wider reading initiative, which includes opportunities for individual reading supervised by the school librarian in the special reading space in the library. The school has a whole-school plan for developing numeracy skills, which all students benefit from.
- The school's regular and thorough systems to check on students' levels of progress and attainment are helping them to improve at a faster rate. The school is effectively addressing the needs of more-able students and has initiated graduate tutorial support for selected students in Years 10 and 11 in order to ensure that they meet their higher targets.

The quality of teaching is good

- Aspects of teaching have improved rapidly and, overall, it is usually good, including in English and mathematics. A proportion is now outstanding and this ensures that, over time, students making good progress.
- The vast majority of students are keen to learn and readily engage in their lessons because most teachers carefully plan to include a range of activities that actively involve them. This helps to maintain students' interest and motivation to learn. Occasionally, work is not hard enough for

some students.

- Work in books and on displays show that homework and projects are used carefully to consolidate learning and that students have opportunities for extended writing. In science in Key Stage 3 students complete a project each term and homework is used to extend and develop the theme and is matched to students' ability levels.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good and there is a purposeful atmosphere in nearly all lessons that encourages learning and ensures students understand what they have to do and why.
- A majority of teachers use marking effectively to ensure students know how well they are doing and how to improve. In music, for example, students comment on the helpful nature of feedback that they receive from teachers, which helps them to improve their work.
- In a majority of lessons teachers have high expectations, expect students to work hard and plan and teach lessons which extend and deepen students' thinking and ability to solve problems. For example, in Year 9 mathematics lesson the teacher used high-quality questioning to address common misconceptions in factorising a quadratic expression so that students made better progress. However, in some lessons questions are not as effective and students are not challenged to think for themselves.
- Teachers in many lessons include opportunities for group work, paired discussion and for students to look at each other's work. This helps to consolidate students' learning as they have to explain their ideas more fully to others. However, this is not consistent; a few lessons are overly led by the teacher and students listen for too long and have less opportunity to learn by themselves.
- Teachers include activities in their lessons which encourage students to use the language specific to their subjects. This helps them to learn to read and spell key words; for example, in a Year 7 design and technology lesson, students, through hands-on practical work, understood and could name and describe the properties of two types of plastics and explain how these reacted to heat.
- In some lessons there is not sufficient opportunity for students to complete extensive independent work and this means that they do not effectively consolidate and extend their learning to make more progress than is usually expected.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students display good behaviour in lessons and around the school; they cooperate well, show respect to teachers and to each other and are proud of their school.
- Students say they feel safe in school, are aware of how to avoid risks and say that bullying is rare but that, if it does happen, it is dealt with immediately and effectively. Students say that behaviour is now much better and that the school's internal systems such as the 'turnaround room' and the 'corridor support system', where pastoral staff patrol during lessons to sort out any problems, ensure that disruption to learning in lessons is now rare. This was confirmed by almost all of the parents and staff who responded to the questionnaires.
- Students know teachers are always ready to help them if they need it and many talked about how the school helps them to be self-disciplined and to achieve their best.
- Students have a keen insight into social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues, as discussion and debate are actively encouraged through the work of the student council and the school chaplaincy, and groups such as in the Justice and Peace group. Students enjoy taking part in a wide range of events, activities and clubs at lunchtime and after school. Large numbers of students across all year groups take part in musical events, the various choirs and learn to play a musical instrument. Leaders and governors ensure that funding is carefully directed to ensure that all students known to be eligible for free school meals are funded by the school to ensure they can take part in these activities, including trips with the orchestra to Europe.
- As a part of the Loreto Family of schools, students have opportunities to meet with students from other Loreto schools both locally and internationally. The Loreto values of sincerity, truth,

joy, freedom, justice, internationality and excellence feature prominently in forging the harmonious ethos of the school. Students who recently joined the school from other countries say that the school is friendly and welcoming.

- A large proportion of students who attend the school have significant emotional and social needs. The school has developed effective behaviour management and care systems to help students, including art and horticultural therapy, counselling and support from a mental health nurse.
- Whilst there has been a reduction in the number of recorded behavioural incidents in the last year, fixed-term exclusions remain considerably higher than national levels. However, this year the number of incidents has decreased. This improving picture indicates that the school systems are having a positive effect.
- The pastoral team maintain excellent communication with off-site providers who work with a very small number of students. This ensures that any issues of non-attendance and poor behaviour are followed up quickly and that students are regularly monitored to check they make good progress in their work and are making the progress necessary for them to be able to re-enter the school.
- Attendance has been improving slowly over the past four years and is now broadly average. The number of students who are absent from school for significant amounts of time remains higher than average.
- The number of students leaving the school who do not continue in education, training or employment is extremely low, as the school has close links with local sixth forms and colleges, including the Loreto Sixth Form, which is where a large proportion of students go to on leaving the school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders at all levels, supported by governors, are highly ambitious for students and have worked relentlessly over the last three years to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching and learning by rigorously checking how good it is. Leaders effectively balance good systems for checking and monitoring the quality of teaching with high standards of care and nurture for students and staff. The management of teachers' performance is monitored closely by governors and effectively linked to pay and rewards. While effectively supporting teachers' professional development, leaders also deal firmly with teaching that is failing to promote high standards and progress for students. As a result, teaching is now good and some is outstanding.
- All leaders and managers can accurately identify the strengths and areas of improvement within the school, and especially in teaching. Professional development is led extremely effectively by teachers in the school who share best practice and develop their own methods for improving teaching and learning. The leadership abilities of staff at all levels across the school has increased, and improvements are being achieved at a faster pace and are more firmly rooted. Achieving further improvements in the school is helped by the opportunities for staff to work with teachers in outstanding schools in the Loreto Family of Schools, including those based locally.
- The school ethos and the Loreto values modelled throughout the school reinforce an aspirational culture that provides a highly positive learning environment. This is strongly confirmed by parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A strong feature of the school is the effort it puts into providing many opportunities for students to take part in activities at lunchtimes, or after school, to develop their talents.
- A highly effective range of subjects offered from Year 9 allows students to choose different combinations of traditional and work-related subjects depending on their career interests. The way in which the school arranges the Year 7 form groups is very effective; the transition from primary to secondary school is made easy for students and ensures that they quickly settle down to their work. The curriculum meets the needs of students well.

- The pastoral care, guidance and support provided by the school are good and ensure that all students are kept safe, cared for and supported to achieve and make progress in line with their peers, and especially the most vulnerable.
- The school's local authority partner knows that the school requires light-touch support because of its track record of rapid improvement over the last three years and the strengths in leadership that reside within the school and the governing body.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are robust and meet statutory requirements. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of students when attending off-site provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is outstanding. Governors have relentlessly challenged the school to improve standards and have been uncompromising in holding the school to account when standards have dipped. Governors employ robust and very effective audit and quality checks on the work of the school. They oversee the performance management of staff and the headteacher, making comparisons to data on teaching quality and students' progress in subject areas. Governors regularly check on the quality of teaching with every head of department, linking this to information about students' achievement and progress and to the pay and progression of staff. Governors have a wide range of relevant professional skills that are effectively applied to ensure robust financial and educational checks. The governors implemented a five-year plan during this year, for the next phase in the development of the school, to ensure that excellence in all aspects is achieved. Governors have a detailed and very accurate view of the strengths of the school. They actively review financial data, insisting on separate accounting for use of the pupil premium grant linked to reports of how this has impacted on improving standards for this group.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105574
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	412867

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	702
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Cassidy
Headteacher	Luke Dillon
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2010
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