

Notre Dame Catholic College

180 Great Homer Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L5 5AF

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of education provided by the school declined significantly after the last inspection. Leaders were not effective in preventing a sharp drop in the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils made.
- Recent changes in senior leadership have stopped the decline and, despite work still to be done, the trend is reversing.
- The implementation and impact of the curriculum requires strengthening. Pupils are not consistently provided with opportunities to learn with depth, detail and fluency.
- Despite recent improvements, subject leadership requires strengthening, particularly that of computer science and science.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to plan work that stretches pupils' thinking, knowledge and skills.
- The quality of teaching within and across departments varies. Recent actions and systems to secure effective teaching have not had the time to embed, so do not consistently demonstrate the impact required.
- The management of the provision provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) requires improvement.
- Despite recent improvements, the progress which pupils make requires improvement, especially for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and the most able.
- The teaching of academic courses in the sixth form varies. As a result, students who follow these courses, especially the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors demonstrate the capacity to further improve the standard of education provided. The quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make are improving.
- Pupils say the school is a happy and safe place to be. Their conduct and attendance are good.
- Students who follow vocational subjects in the sixth form make strong progress. Leadership is effective. Students' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise progress by ensuring that pupils, especially for those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, and the most able, receive the support and challenge needed.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the implementation and impact of the curriculum, so that pupils are consistently provided with opportunities to learn in detail and with a greater depth
 - strengthening the leadership of SEND to focus more on the learning and progress of pupils with SEND
 - ensuring subject leadership is consistently effective, particularly for computer studies and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information consistently to set work that stretches pupils' thinking, knowledge and skills.
 - embedding the recently introduced actions to secure consistently good teaching across and within departments.
- Improve the quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes by ensuring that students, including the most able, benefit from consistently effective teaching on A-level courses so that they attain the grades of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership at all levels significantly declined after the last inspection. As a result, the behaviour, attendance and progress of pupils suffered. Pupils' examination results fell to a poor level, across a range of subjects and including those in English and mathematics. Leadership, most notably senior leadership, has been strengthened recently, including at headteacher and deputy headteacher levels. The headteacher at the time of the previous inspection, who had taken up a secondment elsewhere, has returned to the school in her previous role. As a result, the decline has been stopped and, despite work still to be done, there is a shared vision to improve and the declining trend is reversing.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the challenges which the school faces in order to further improve the standard of education it provides. They demonstrate the capacity to make the necessary improvements. The success of leaders' actions is evident in securing good attendance and conduct. This has established a firm foundation for effective learning.
- Senior leaders have a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching, so that pupils in all year groups learn effectively. The training that senior leaders have put into place has been received positively by staff, who feel that it is having a positive impact on their skills and pupils' learning. However, changes are not fully embedded, so the quality of teaching varies between and within subjects. As a result, although pupils are now making better progress, further work is required from leaders to secure consistently good progress.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have focused on training subject leaders to become more effective. They have also focused on appointing new subject leaders. However, despite subject leadership improving, it does not demonstrate the strength regularly shown by the school's senior leaders. There is a greater focus on monitoring so subject leaders have a more informed overview of the subjects they lead. This is having a positive impact, for example in mathematics, where a much-needed improvement in teaching and outcomes is building momentum to go forward. However, in other areas, such as computer studies and science, the upward trajectory is less evident.
- Subject leaders are improving teachers' accuracy when determining the levels that pupils are working at, including those assessments and tests which are used to report progress to senior leaders and governors. Despite leaders having a more accurate view of outcomes in their subjects, at times when assessments are reported they are either over generous or too cautious.
- Leaders have acted to improve the curriculum which the pupils receive. Overall, this has led to strengthening of the curriculum. More pupils now follow courses which match their needs and interests than was previously the case. For example, in key stage 4 pupils benefit from vocational subjects and other provision when these match their requirements and provide a positive route to next steps in education or training.
- This success is not evident in other aspects of the curriculum. Subject leaders are taking action to improve the implementation and impact of the curriculum in their areas

of responsibility. This has had a more positive impact in some areas than others. For example, in geography pupils are routinely provided with opportunities to think deeply and learn with precision and accuracy. Pupils enjoy a rich and rewarding curriculum in this area, including the most able and pupils with low starting points. However, in other subjects, these strengths are less consistent, such as science. In these cases, the curriculum does not include enough detail and lacks opportunities to learn with depth and fluency. This restricts pupils' progress.

- Leaders plan a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, which widen their experience, broaden their expertise and heighten their expectations. The programme caters for and develops pupils' wider academic, cultural, artistic and sporting interests. Pupils respond effectively to supporting charities, and recognise their role in helping others. They recognise the importance of equality and their role in supporting and strengthening fundamental British values.
- The careers guidance programme is effective. Pupils value the independent advice and guidance that they receive. As a result, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, move on to further education or training.
- Leadership of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has recently been reviewed to make it more effective. Previously, disadvantaged pupils were especially vulnerable to weak attendance and exclusion. Leaders have introduced effective systems to monitor and support the good attendance and conduct of these pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils now attend school regularly and behave well. Leaders are clear that disadvantaged pupils' learning benefits from good attitudes to learning. However, the challenge provided by the work which they are set varies. As a result, although disadvantaged pupils make better progress overall than previously, it is not consistently strong across subjects.
- The leadership of pupils with SEND requires strengthening. Pupils' pastoral needs, including of those with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) are met effectively. As a result, these pupils attend regularly and are supported sensitively to secure their good conduct. Staff work closely with the pupils' primary schools to ensure that these pupils are known and supported well by staff when they enter Year 7. Despite these strengths, leadership has not given enough attention to improving pupils' progress. Some pupils with SEND make good progress in some subjects, but this is not routinely the case. Leaders have not been fully effective in supporting teachers to identify the needs of these pupils and ensure that they receive the help needed to make good progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The governing body, including governors who have been in post for a number of years, is determined to learn from the past and to ensure that the emerging improvements gain in strength. The actions that governors have taken, including training and recruitment, have strengthened the governing body's systems and practice.
- Governors recognise the school's current strengths, weaknesses and the priorities for further improvement. They understand their responsibility to ensure that current areas of weakness are addressed. Success can be seen in the strengthened leadership of mathematics and pupils' improved progress in that subject. These improvements

demonstrate that governance supports leadership and that together they have the capacity to make the required improvements.

- Governors uphold and promote the school's values clearly. Governors are effective in reminding staff, pupils, parents and carers that the pupils deserve the broadest and best educational experience and that it is their purpose to provide this.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They are now confident and capable when supporting and challenging senior leaders. Their experience of financial management enables them to support senior leaders' plans to strengthen the quality of education that the school provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are aware of the risk which pupils face, including those which are present in pockets of the community locally. Staff are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils. This includes risks of child sexual exploitation, gang and knife-related crime, and radicalisation. Staff take the time to know pupils well, so provide for their safety and well-being effectively.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. They have systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- School leaders' work with external agencies and parents is effective. They provided inspectors with examples of where they have acted swiftly when required to secure pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals are made to external agencies as appropriate.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including when online. They know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the current senior leadership team was put into place. However, despite the improving picture and pockets of strong practice, the effectiveness of teaching remains mixed between and within departments.
- Senior leaders have gone back to basics to improve the effectiveness of teaching. This has strengthened teaching across the school from its previously weak position. For example, a consistent approach to managing behaviour has been most effective in ensuring that learning is not disturbed by the actions of others. Pupils now have positive attitudes to learning.
- Improvement in teaching links to teachers' good subject knowledge. Activities engage pupils in challenging and interesting activities. As a result, pupils learn well. These strengths are evident, but not consistent, across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, geography and sport.
- At times, teachers set tasks which do not challenge pupils sufficiently, especially the most able pupils. In these cases, teachers do not use the assessment information available about pupils' learning effectively to set work which matches their needs. As a result, these pupils are not provided with opportunities to think deeply enough and

respond with detail, creativity and fluency.

- Many pupils begin Year 7 with literacy levels at or above the national average. The actions taken to support those with lower-than-average levels to catch up by the end of Year 7 are effective. Teachers take the time to model standard English and to note and correct pupils' misconceptions, such as those with spelling, punctuation and grammar. In some subjects, such as English, geography and sport, pupils are provided with opportunities to attain advanced literacy skills. For example, in geography they read broadsheet newspaper articles to ponder complex issues and respond with high-level language and articulacy. This effective promotion of advanced literacy skills is not embedded across subjects.
- Additional training has not been fully effective in ensuring that teaching for pupils with SEND is consistently good. The support provided for these pupils has been effective in significantly improving their attendance and attitudes to learning in lessons. However, teachers do not routinely use the information provided about the academic needs of these pupils effectively and this restricts their progress.
- Pupils and parents generally say that they are satisfied with the homework that pupils are set. It is set regularly and at the correct level.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development is highly valued by school leaders. As a result, staff teach and promote this aspect effectively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to their mature appreciation of the rights of all. Pupils said that they are confident to be who they want to be and supportive of others to do the same. They value people's differences and other faiths and cultures.
- Pupils enjoy their time spent at the school, including their social time. They are confident, happy and enjoy positive relationships with one another and staff. These views are typified by one response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View: children 'very rarely come home without a smile on their faces'.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. Checks of bullying records made by inspectors showed that incidents of bullying are followed up and resolved effectively. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from the risks of exploitation, including when using social media.
- Discussions with pupils made it clear that staff know and care about pupils. Pupils say that staff are approachable and considerate of pupils' mental and physical well-being. Leaders contact additional support services if required. Pupils benefit from the attention which leaders provide for their good dietary habits. Leaders inform pupils about looking after themselves and support healthy choices for pupils. The school's own catering service, including its popular breakfast club, supports pupils' healthy eating and drinking effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Inspectors were impressed by the pride with which pupils routinely complete their work. Their work shows care and accuracy and is contributing to pupils' improved learning.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They move around the school in a positive manner at breaktime, lunchtime and at the change of lessons. They arrive punctually at lessons. They treat the school environment with respect and do not leave litter lying around.
- Pupils enjoy and value school. As a result, they attend regularly. Leaders' determined actions have transformed pupils' attendance, which now broadly matches that of others nationally.
- Leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The actions of the current senior leaders to transform the poor progress made by pupils in recent years are having a positive impact. In 2017 and 2018, pupils attained examination grades across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, well below those with similar starting points nationally.
- Evidence in pupils' books very clearly demonstrates the improvements which have been made. Pupils are making better progress across all year groups than in recent years and across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. However, despite this improving trend, overall progress requires improvement to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' progress has improved markedly in mathematics this year, because of strong subject leadership and more effective teaching. However, despite this positive trend, many pupils are not consistently attaining the grades of which they are capable. They have not fully overcome some gaps in their basic skills linked to the legacy of previous weak teaching. There is a similar picture in English. Nevertheless, progress is improving because pupils try hard and value the improvements which are taking place across the school.
- The progress of the most able pupils requires strengthening. In some cases, these pupils are making good progress, because teachers provide opportunities for them to access challenging resources, think deeply and work independently. However, too often this is not the case for the most able pupils, and this restricts their learning and progress.
- Improvements in the attendance and attitudes to learning of disadvantaged pupils have enhanced their learning. This is improving their progress. However, the full range of actions by leaders to secure good teaching and stronger progress for disadvantaged pupils have yet to embed, so it is too early to judge their full impact.
- Pupils with SEND who are supported with an EHC plan typically make good progress. Staff know these pupils well and take effective action to support their learning. However, the support for other pupils with SEND is less effective and their progress

requires improvement.

- Leaders monitor effectively the quality of education for pupils who attend alternative provision. These pupils take pride in their progress and benefit from appropriate curriculums that focus on preparing them for the next stage of their education.
- Senior leaders have made securing pupils' next steps in education and training a school priority. This was previously a weakness of the school's provision. As a result of leaders' actions, almost all the pupils who completed Year 11 in 2018 moved on to courses, including those who were disadvantaged and those with SEND.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The 16 to 19 study programmes require improvement because students, including the most able students, do not make consistently good progress on academic courses. However, in vocational courses, students make strong progress, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement, notably in some of the academic courses which students follow and especially for the most able students. In these cases, teachers do not consistently set work that challenges students to attain the highest grades. However, teaching is effective in vocational courses, so students learn well.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Despite current weaknesses in teaching and the progress of some students in academic courses, there is an improving picture. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the current quality of provision and their actions are having an impact on improving teaching and progress. They have refined the academic courses which are provided for students, so those which remain are those on which students achieve the most success. Leaders have also provided additional time and resources for staff to improve their teaching, especially at A level and for the most able students. The impact of this is evident in students' better progress in some areas, for example in geography. Leaders have developed and sustained a strong vocational curriculum from which students benefit. Students routinely complete these courses and move on aspirational next steps in education and employment.
- Students who resit GCSE English and/or mathematics make better progress than others nationally in improving their grades.
- Checks made by inspectors found that safeguarding is effective in the sixth form. Students are well prepared for adulthood. Their conduct is good. They are supported well in managing risk and looking after their own welfare.
- Leaders have been effective in addressing the previously weak attendance of students in the sixth form, which was noted at the last inspection. The systems and support which leaders have put in place have secured students' good attendance.
- Students benefit from the activities which leaders provide to broaden their study programmes. Leaders ensure that opportunities for students' personal development and work-related learning form an integral part of their curriculum experience. These aspects of the curriculum meet the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes and make a strong contribution to students' wider development.
- Sixth-form leaders are effective in providing careers guidance and information to

support students' next steps in education and employment. The links with local universities are a positive example of students being encouraged to move on to the aspirational destinations of which they are capable. As a result, every student who completed Year 13 in 2018 moved on to a relevant course or employment. Around 80% of these progressed to higher education.

School details

Unique reference number	104706
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10046098

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	846
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Collette Rowlands
Headteacher	Frances Harrison
Telephone number	01513 305122
Website	http://notredameliverpool.com/
Email address	ao@notredame.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 February 2015

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided school.
- The school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in December 2016.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at Everton Free School, Harmonize Academy, New Heights High School, NexGen Academy, ACE

Hospital School, Liverpool College and Prudentia Education.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, governors, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and the school improvement partner.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, special educational needs information, the pupil premium plan, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 57 staff survey responses, two pupil survey responses, 23 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and nine written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and scrutinised pupils' work in a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Gill	Ofsted Inspector

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