

Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic College

Morecambe Road, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 2RX

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils described the school as a safe place to be. They said that they are confident to go to staff with any worries. Typically, pupils enjoy coming to school and are happy.

For much of the time, pupils behave well in lessons, are respectful and allow others to learn. However, outside of lessons, the attitudes and conduct of some pupils do not live up to leaders' expectations. Sixth-form students act as role models, but some younger pupils do not follow their positive example.

In general, pupils said that bullying is not a problem. Some pupils said that if bullying does happen, staff help to resolve the issue. However, a significant minority of pupils think that not enough is done to tackle bullying.

In lessons, most teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils should be able to do. However, not all pupils benefit from a consistently well-planned curriculum. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Students in the sixth form, however, do benefit from a strong curriculum and achieve well.

Pupils access a range of enrichment activities, including visits to art galleries, museums and sporting events. However, pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is not consistently well planned across key stage 4.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are in the process of improving the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced, and suitably ambitious. Leaders aim to ensure that their revised curriculum better meets the interests and needs of pupils. For example, the number of pupils who choose to study the English Baccalaureate at key stage 4 is low. To address this, leaders have prioritised improving the curriculum in languages at key stage 3. This is to ensure that pupils have the depth of knowledge that they require to study a language successfully in key stage 4. They have also appointed additional language teachers.

In most subjects, leaders have devised new curriculum plans. These plans set out the order in which pupils will learn topics and concepts. Even so, some leaders' plans do not identify the precise knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Therefore, some pupils do not learn new subject content as well as they should.

Some elements of teachers' subject knowledge in some subjects are not secure. This means that they are not well equipped to deliver the curriculum as effectively as they should. Consequently, some pupils do not recall previously taught knowledge with

sufficient accuracy or in enough detail. Nevertheless, teachers benefit from leaders' commitment to developing their subject expertise.

Leaders have overhauled their approaches to assessing how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Some teachers use assessment skilfully to identify inaccuracies in pupils' knowledge. They adapt the curriculum accordingly. However, this is not the case in all subjects.

Reading remains a priority for school leaders. Leaders have ensured that appropriate systems are in place to check which pupils in Years 7 to 9 are behind with their reading. Leaders support these pupils to catch-up quickly and to read with increased fluency and accuracy.

The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) provides teachers with appropriate information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some teachers do not always make the best use of this information to adapt their curriculum plans. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not acquire the knowledge they need to progress as well as they should.

Typically, the school's systems to manage pupils' behaviour in lessons are used well. However, there is some way to go to improve the behaviour of some pupils outside of lessons. Too many pupils are disrespectful and, at times, lack basic manners.

Students in the sixth form have access to an appropriate range of academic and vocational subjects. They show positive attitudes to their learning. Students feel challenged and supported. Typically, sixth-form students achieve well. Students appreciate the support that they receive with personal statements and other careers-based learning. Students are mature and respectful to each other.

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 benefit from a suitably planned personal development curriculum. This helps them to understand a range of topics, including mental health, relationships, and some aspects of British values. However, the PSHE curriculum is not well planned for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, pupils value their careers education. They appreciate the opportunities to talk to education and training providers. Leaders meet the requirements of the Baker clause.

Governors and other school leaders care deeply about pupils and students. However, governors do not hold leaders to account as well as they should. Governors do not keep their knowledge and understanding of their legal duties in relation to safeguarding up to date. Staff feel valued and supported with their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders ensure that staff understand their responsibility to safeguard pupils. Pupils feel comfortable in sharing any safeguarding worries with staff. Staff are quick

to report any concerns. Safeguarding records are appropriately maintained. Leaders use relevant information to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need.

Where necessary, senior leaders source additional support from external agencies. This is to review and strengthen safeguarding practices and to train staff. However, governors have not received up-to-date safeguarding training. Leaders now have plans in place to address this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In many subjects, leaders' plans do not outline in sufficient depth the specific knowledge that pupils must know and remember. This hinders how effectively pupils build up new knowledge and progress through the curriculum. Leaders should refine their curriculum plans so that teachers are clear about precisely what pupils should know and remember. Where needed, leaders must ensure that teachers are provided with the right training so that they can successfully implement these plans, including by addressing any deficits in subject knowledge.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers make suitable adaptations to their subject plans for pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND do not progress across the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained in how to adapt the curriculum effectively so that it meets the needs of pupils with SEND.
- There is a sizeable number of pupils who do not demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours towards visitors, staff and other pupils. This is particularly the case during social times and when pupils move around the school site. This is having a detrimental impact on how some staff and pupils feel when they are in school. Leaders should monitor this situation carefully and use the information they obtain to identify and put in place appropriate actions to improve pupils' behaviour at social times.
- The PSHE curriculum is underdeveloped at key stage 4. Consequently, some pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not sufficiently well prepared to understand the values that underpin life in Britain today. Leaders need to plan a comprehensive and coherent programme that focuses on the important personal development knowledge that pupils need to learn. Leaders should also provide training for staff where necessary.
- Over time, the governing body has not done enough to improve its collective knowledge and expertise, particularly in relation to safeguarding. As a result, not enough is being done to challenge leaders about the quality of their work, or to hold leaders to account for the overall performance of the school and its pupils. As a matter of urgency, governors should ensure that they undertake appropriate training and development, particularly in relation to safeguarding. They must also put in place more effective processes that allow them to check on the quality of leaders' work.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	119798
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10204443
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1011
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phil Jones
Headteacher	Helen Seddon
Website	www.olcc.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in February 2018.
- The number of pupils and students on roll at the school has increased considerably since the previous inspection.
- Leaders work with Chadwick High School to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils in Years 8, 10 and 11.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, one of whom is both the designated safeguarding lead and the SENDCo, middle leaders, teachers, and members of support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the new chair of governors.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with the school improvement partner and a representative of the Diocese of Lancaster.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, geography, history, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited several lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils and students about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' and students' work. Inspectors also considered other curriculum areas, including health and social care.
- Inspectors met with a wide range of staff responsible for safeguarding. They reviewed a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, including the leaders' pre-employment checks on staff. Inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority, staff, pupils, students and governors about wider aspects of safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents and carers, and pupils and students around safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined other documents, including the school's improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document, and records about pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes, lunchtimes, in corridors, and during registration and lessons. They also spoke to pupils and students about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of their behaviour. Inspectors also discussed pupils' programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed the 72 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included the 49 comments submitted via the free-text facility.
- Inspectors also considered the 79 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire and the 57 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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