

Inspection of Loreto Grammar School

Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 4AH

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Loreto Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Loreto Grammar School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Loreto Grammar School is an inspirational place to be. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, flourish here. Pupils and students are self-motivated, independent, and show a quiet determination to be the best that they can be.

Leaders and staff have the highest expectations of pupils' and students' behaviour and achievement. Pupils and students appreciate a curriculum that focuses on the academic while broadening their horizons through a plethora of artistic and cultural experiences. Pupils and students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils and students feel safe and happy at school. They show an understanding of 'speaking truth' and treating others with respect and compassion. Leaders have taken care to prioritise pupils' and students' mental and physical well-being. Parents and carers said that staff go the extra mile to ensure that the needs of their children are met.

The behaviour of pupils and students is exemplary. Leaders, together with staff, have cultivated a considerate and kind school community where pupils feel valued. Leaders and staff deal effectively and quickly with bullying and harassment.

Pupils benefit from a vast array of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Teachers encourage all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to take part. Staff design activities that spark pupils' and students' interests. For example, pupils enjoy attending the juggling club or the 'just like us' club. Often, enrichment opportunities are carefully linked to the curriculum. This complements pupils' and students' learning of the subjects that they study.

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

Enabling pupils to 'become their very best self' is at the heart of leaders' vision at Loreto Grammar School. Leaders have designed an ambitious, rich and varied curriculum that inspires pupils, including those pupils with SEND, to succeed. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, achieve highly. They value the opportunity to study three modern foreign languages at key stage 3. A very high proportion of pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects in key stage 4.

The curriculum has been carefully thought out by leaders, rooted in what they know is best for pupils. This is especially true for disadvantaged pupils and students. Teachers carefully consider these pupils' and students' needs when designing learning. All subject leaders have thought skilfully about what pupils need to know. These leaders have applied their expert knowledge to ensure that pupils learn what they should in the most suitable order.

Teachers are subject specialists. They combine their expertise with a passion for their subjects to instil a love of learning in pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to be curious, ask questions and think critically. Pupils and students have many opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. They are adept in using accurate subject-specific vocabulary when talking about their learning. This helps pupils and students to organise and connect ideas.

Teachers use a range of methods to check that pupils and students know and remember earlier learning. Teachers' effective use of assessment strategies means that pupils' misconceptions are addressed quickly. Teachers ensure that pupils' previous learning is fully secure before moving on.

Reading has a high profile throughout the school. Pupils, and students, are avid readers and they enjoy reading for pleasure. Teachers of all subjects promote a love of reading consistently well. Pupils typically have a high level of reading skills upon entering the school. Staff enhance pupils' knowledge through an extensive reading curriculum, including reading club and library activities. Pupils' exposure to a wide range of texts contributes positively to high-quality debate and discussion across subjects.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly and accurately. Teachers make effective use of leaders' information about this group of pupils. This helps to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met securely in the classroom. Pupils with SEND, and disadvantaged pupils, thrive.

Pupils manage their own behaviour well. They are attentive and eager to learn. Their positive attitudes to learning mean that low-level disruption is extremely rare and learning time is seldom lost. Students in the sixth form are exemplary role models for younger pupils.

Leaders place great importance on pupils' personal development. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to school and community projects. There are ample opportunities for them to take leading roles. For example, students take pride in running their own enterprise businesses, volunteering locally, and taking part in foreign exchange trips. Pupils and students learn about equality and diversity. They are prepared well to take their roles as responsible global citizens.

Pupils and students benefit from an exceptional careers programme that informs them well to make decisions about their next steps. Pupils have extensive access to learning about higher education, apprenticeships and local employers. Students value the experience that they gain from work placements, university visits and apprenticeship events. A high proportion of students in the sixth form secure places on competitive university courses.

Governors are not complacent. They support and challenge leaders effectively. Senior leaders evaluate accurately the quality of education for pupils and students. This helps to inform their plans. Staff love working at the school. They know that

their efforts for pupils are valued highly by leaders. Staff appreciate leaders' actions to look after their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established culture of vigilance at Loreto Grammar School. Staff at all levels are alert to the risks that pupils and students may face. All staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare.

Leaders proactively seek and secure support from a range of external agencies. Leaders are adept in ensuring that vulnerable pupils get appropriate help. Leaders follow up on any concerns about a pupil's welfare in a swift and sensitive manner.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, such as how to work safely online. In an age-appropriate way, pupils learn about healthy relationships, consent and the importance of respecting others.

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.

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	138464
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10226373
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,075
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Jim Lister
Headteacher	Jane Beever
Website	www.loretogrammar.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Loreto Grammar School converted to become an academy school in October 2012. When its predecessor school, Loreto Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- This is a Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors also spoke with members of the local governing body, trustees, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- Inspectors spoke to many pupils and students about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documentation, improvement plans, minutes of local governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and students to check on the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, design technology, modern foreign languages and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils and students about their learning, and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Niamh Howlett	His Majesty's Inspector
Sanjay Patel	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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