

# Inspection of Loreto College

Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3RQ

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Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Lucy Thompson. This school is a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Healy.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are exceptionally well supported to succeed at Loreto College. The school is driven by its ethos to support all pupils to value 'freedom, sincerity, truth, justice and joy'. There is a strong emphasis on living and demonstrating these values. Staff know pupils well and have very high expectations for them. The school provides an ambitious curriculum, where pupils develop secure subject knowledge. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make exceptional academic progress.

Teachers build strong relationships with pupils, which allows them to thrive and enjoy their education. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They welcome visitors and share their school experiences enthusiastically. In line with the school's Catholic ethos, pupils are taught to respect and celebrate difference. There is a strong culture of tolerance and inclusion. Bullying is rare and pupils are safe.

The school provides pupils with an extensive offer of opportunities and experiences to develop their character. Students in the sixth form are encouraged to take on leadership responsibility and to act as role models. For example, sixth-form students act as mentors for younger pupils and they run their own extra-curricular activities.

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

The school has carefully considered the starting points of pupils before they arrive in Year 7. Leaders have put in place a range of activities that assist pupils in their transition from primary school. There is support available for pupils that experience mental health challenges, such as anxiety. 'Retreat days', that are held for each year group, help pupils to learn useful well-being techniques.

Pupils follow a rich and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum matches, and often exceeds, the scope of what is expected nationally. Most pupils study the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate in key stage 4. Students in the sixth form successfully complete very well-designed programmes of study. They are well prepared with the knowledge and skills they need for their next steps.

Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subjects that they deliver. Staff check pupils' understanding and quickly address any errors or misconceptions so that pupils are ready to move on in their learning. Pupils' work is consistently of high quality. Many of the strengths in curriculum design and implementation extend to the sixth form. Leaders have identified areas where some routines need to be strengthened further so that students in the sixth form achieve consistently well.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Leaders quickly identify pupils who cannot read well. These pupils receive effective support from well-trained staff. Pupils at the early stages of reading catch up quickly. This helps them to access the full curriculum. The school promotes a love of reading across all subjects. Pupils benefit from a well-stocked library that is a welcoming space. Sixth-form students have been trained to offer support

to younger readers. The school identifies pupils' needs with precision and shares this information with staff. There are a range of strategies available to support pupils with SEND, which are used appropriately when needed. Pupils with SEND achieve very well, including in the sixth form.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are highly supportive and respectful of each other. Classrooms are calm and focused. Pupils said that this is because there are clear systems in place that they understand and that help them to learn. Teachers have positive working relationships with pupils and, as a result, they are willing to answer questions and to take risks. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other, asking interesting questions that demonstrate their curiosity to learn.

There is a comprehensive careers programme that starts from Year 7, which provides advice and guidance about different career pathways. The talents and interests of pupils are developed through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which take place primarily at lunchtime. There is a comprehensive personal development provision, where pupils are encouraged to be engaged and active citizens. For example, the 'Wow' (women of the world) club promotes gender equality and there are many opportunities for pupils to engage in fundraising activities for charity.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have high ambition for their pupils and want the best for them. Staff, pupils and parents share this ambition. Staff feel that their workload and well-being have been carefully considered by leaders. They appreciate leaders' open-door policy. Staff benefit from high-quality professional development and early careers teachers receive excellent support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Routines and expectations in the sixth form do not always match those of the rest of the school. This results in some students in the sixth form not achieving as highly as they could. Leaders have correctly identified this as a priority for further development. The school should ensure that all staff have the highest ambition for what sixth-form students can achieve.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138106
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345334
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	926
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	153
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Healy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lucy Thompson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.loreto.herts.sch.uk">www.loreto.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Loreto Education Trust.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character and is in the Archdiocese of Westminster. The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was carried out in January 2020. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff and with pupils. Behaviour was observed both in lessons and around the school. The views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Robert Grice, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Victoria Hearn	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector

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