

Loreto High School Chorlton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105574
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	336523
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2010
Reporting inspector	David Cox

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	493
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr M Connor
Headteacher	Mr Luke Dillon
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 70% of the time observing teaching and learning, visiting 35 lessons taught by 27 teachers. Inspectors also looked at students' work. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including data about students' progress, records of monitoring, policies, school improvement plans and the 70 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school's strategies for further raising attainment in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness with which the school provides for the wide range of student groups represented in the school, particularly students with English as an additional language, and how it overcomes the challenge of the high rate of student mobility
- whether school leaders at all levels have the capacity to continue the impressive improvement in student outcomes seen in recent years.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. The school is a specialist English and humanities college. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is high as is the proportion of students learning English as an additional language. The largest minority ethnic groups represented in the school are of Eastern European, Black Caribbean and Pakistani backgrounds. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. A very high number of students join the school or leave at times other than the usual start in Year 7; this figure can be as high as 45% in some year groups.

The school was re-launched in 2007 with a new name. A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of the senior leadership team also took up post at this time, along with many new governors.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Loreto is a good and improving school. There are several outstanding features, including the high quality care, guidance and support provided for students. The attention given to individual students is outstanding and reflects the effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity. The school is a calm, friendly and harmonious community where students of all abilities and backgrounds feel settled and happy. Parents and carers think well of the school. The view of one parent was that, 'All staff are approachable and go that extra mile to support the children.' Students enjoy school. Their much improved attendance and their good achievement reflect their eagerness to embrace the significant transformation the school has undergone in the last three years. The rising standards, qualifications in new courses and students' increased social responsibility are equipping students well for their future.

From a relatively low level on entry, students make good progress and leave the school at the end of Year 11 with broadly average attainment. Students make good progress in English and mathematics because they are taught well. Standards are rising rapidly in both subjects and are just below the national average. The curriculum matches the needs of the students well, although in a small minority of subjects there is not a consistent approach to raising students' literacy and numeracy skills.

Teaching and learning are good. The strong emphasis on high-quality teaching and learning ensures students are stimulated and challenged to aim high. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

Students' behaviour has improved markedly over the past three years and it is now good. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community through their commitment to reach out to the local community. They lead and develop sports festivals for younger children and are actively engaged in a programme of visits to residential and care units organised by the chaplaincy group.

Accurate self-evaluation provides senior leaders with a clear view of what works well in school as well as focal areas to develop. There is no complacency as the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors consult regularly in order to maintain the school's impressive improvement. A rapid rise in attainment and attendance and the quality of behaviour, teaching and learning has demonstrated that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by ensuring students' literacy and

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numeracy skills are developed successfully through all subjects.

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - providing opportunities in all lessons for students to develop and practise key skills in literacy and numeracy
 - using data on students' prior performance more effectively to ensure a consistently high level of challenge for all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

When students start school, their skills and knowledge are low for 11-year-olds, with many having weak literacy and numeracy skills as well as challenging emotional and behavioural difficulties. Students thoroughly enjoy their time at Loreto. Lesson observations undertaken by inspectors, along with the current quality of work in students' books, shows that students achieve well and make good progress, and standards are fast approaching national averages by the time they leave the school. Specially adapted programmes in Years 7 and 8 ensure that students make rapid gains in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. This is less evident in design and technology and in physical education, where teaching is less effective. Older students enjoy the wide range of courses on offer and a far greater proportion is now leaving school with vocational or work-related qualifications. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers because the school is very quick to identify and support their individual needs. The large numbers of students learning English as an additional language make good and often outstanding progress as a result of the excellent support they receive and the outreach work with families during the summer holidays. Those students who enter the school at other times of year also make good progress because of well-targeted support programmes. An important part of the re-launching of the school was to 'raise the bar'. Students have responded positively with regards to key values and social skills, including above average attendance and punctuality, behaviour, attitudes and courtesy, smartness of appearance and development of positive relationships. They are keen to participate in lessons and enjoy taking part in discussions. Occasionally, students become bored and do not engage with the lesson activities. This happens when teaching does not inspire them. Students develop a good moral understanding, reflected in their willingness to raise funds for 'St Joseph's Penny', for instance. Students are aware of how to stay safe and their knowledge of internet safety is thorough. Students' good participation, with good representation of different groups, in a very wide range of extra-curricular physical activities means that the majority has a good understanding of how to stay healthy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are knowledgeable, confident and eager to engage all students, whatever their individual needs or circumstances. Teachers ask probing questions to promote good understanding. They value pupils' contributions. As a result students are relaxed but focused and capable of sustaining prolonged concentration. Other adults in the classroom provide very effective support for all groups of students. In most lessons, work is sufficiently challenging and progressive so that students acquire skills readily. In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not always make effective use of data on students' prior performance to match work closely to their needs.

The curriculum has been totally remodelled in recent years, particularly in terms of the vocational programmes in Years 10 and 11, in response to the needs and interests of students. In Years 7 and 8, a two-teacher model has been implemented, teaming up a personal learning tutor (a primary-model teacher) to teach many of the subjects along with input from specialist teachers. Students of all ages speak highly of the opportunities provided through these changes and the impact can be seen in rising standards and levels of attendance.

The highly inclusive learning environment coupled with top quality support programmes ensure that all groups of students are cared for very effectively. School improvement is based around getting to know the students in every way, not just using data. This is particularly well exemplified in the way that personal learning tutors have in-depth knowledge of students' needs, interests and abilities. A five week transition programme involves a number of staff spending a week in the feeder primaries working alongside the Year 6 teachers. This has enabled students to settle in quickly when they start at

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Loreto.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the re-launch of the school, senior leaders, including governors, have successfully re-engaged with the local community. The school's good standing in the community can now be seen in the high number of parents and carers who wish to send their children to Loreto High School. Senior leaders are ambitious in their intent to provide the best education possible and this is shared by staff at all levels. The headteacher is supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior team and they know their school very well. They make excellent use of targets which are challenging and, importantly, the school is generally successful in exceeding them. The school has robustly dealt with a legacy of inadequate teaching and those unable or unwilling to match its expectations. As the school has progressed, more staff have become involved in taking an active leadership role. Good leadership in core subjects alongside that in music and the school's specialist subjects has ensured that standards are rising rapidly and there is effective accountability. Nevertheless, there remain slight inconsistencies across the school, for example, in teaching quality, which still require attention as the school strives to become outstanding.

The school has fruitful partnerships with external organisations. The high level of support from the Loreto Order and sixth form college has made a significant impact on the aspirational and achievement culture which now permeates the school.

The school is very determined to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed and is not in any way disadvantaged. The good achievement of all groups of students indicates the success of the school's policies and interventions. Students of all backgrounds and ability are integrated exceedingly well and have the help they need to succeed. The school promotes community cohesion well. The school's specialist subjects of English and humanities make a positive contribution. Students have participated in a number of community-based projects as part of the specialism such as the 'Reclaim Project' which aims to empower young people in Moss Side.

Governors are highly effective, skilled and visionary in terms of planning how the school can become outstanding. They challenge the school where necessary, especially on cost effectiveness. Safeguarding procedures are good, being enhanced by additional policies such as 'missing child procedures' and all students being on-site throughout lunchtime.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Analysis of responses from parents and carers indicates that most are happy with all aspects of the education that the school provides. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about behaviour. Inspectors recognise that there are a few incidents of poor behaviour but judge that behaviour both in lessons and around the site is good overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Loreto High School Chorlton to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 493 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	59	27	39	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	63	24	34	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	56	29	41	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	59	27	39	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	63	24	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	54	30	43	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	51	32	46	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	56	27	39	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	54	30	43	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	51	30	43	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	53	28	40	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	60	26	37	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	63	23	33	2	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Loreto High School Chorlton, Manchester, M21 7SW

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you about our findings. First of all, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us about how you feel about your school. As a result of the inspection, I judged yours to be a good and improving school. I was particularly impressed by the friendly atmosphere around school. The teaching you receive is good and this, together with your positive attitudes and hard work, enables you to learn quickly and achieve well. Your examination results in Year 11 are broadly average and getting better every year.

The headteacher and other leaders are constantly working to make things better for you so that there is now a good range of subjects and courses to meet everyone's needs. You told us how much you value the wide range of extra-curricular activities. I agree with your view that you are very well cared for in school and that there is always someone to help if you have a problem. The school's arrangements to keep you safe are good.

However, even in a good school there are things that could be improved. We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to improve your literacy and numeracy skills so that standards in English and mathematics can rise even further. Also, they need to ensure opportunities are not missed for you to practise these key skills in all lessons. We have suggested that in some lessons better use could be made of the data available on your learning so that you can be given more challenging work. The school community has worked exceedingly hard in recent years to provide you with the best opportunities to do well and in return, I hope you will make sure that you act on their advice and suggestions.

I wish you and the school all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Cox

Lead inspector

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