

Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic High School

St Anthony's Drive, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire PR2 3SQ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and governors have high ambitions for all pupils at Our Lady's Catholic High School. They expect all pupils to succeed.

Pupils are happy to belong to this warm school community where they are welcomed as 'one of ours'. Pupils show kindness to each other. They celebrate differences between people. Pupils are confident that leaders will act to address any incidents of bullying quickly and effectively. They told inspectors that there was someone they could talk to if they had any worries or concerns. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum. They achieve well overall. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and disadvantaged pupils.

Staff have high expectations with regards to pupils' behaviour. Pupils learn well in a calm environment. They behave well around the school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and activities. They told inspectors that there is something for everyone to try and to enjoy. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about cross-curricular trips to France and Spain. The animal club and the sustainable gardening club are examples of the rich breadth of activities that are on offer for pupils.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to an ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. Over the last few years, the curriculum has been increasingly well thought out. Subject leaders have crafted a curriculum which enables pupils to build on their prior knowledge. However, in a small number of subjects at key stage 3, leaders have not considered the building blocks of knowledge carefully enough. This sometimes leads to gaps in what pupils know and can do.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They typically explain new concepts well. This helps pupils to feel confident when new ideas are introduced. However, in a few subjects, particularly in key stage 3, leaders' current approaches to assessment do not furnish teachers with the information that they need to identify pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. As a result, some pupils do not remember their learning over time as well as they should.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and effectively. Staff use their expertise to ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported in the classroom. Pupils with SEND access all curriculum subjects alongside their peers.

Leaders have improved the reading curriculum. They have placed a clear emphasis on developing pupils' reading and vocabulary knowledge in lessons. Staff support those pupils who need help to catch up with their reading knowledge well. This helps these pupils to access the wider curriculum.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and during social times. Pastoral staff work closely with pupils whose behaviour does not meet leaders' high expectations. This supports these pupils to reflect on and improve their behaviour. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils benefit from an effective personal development curriculum. This helps them to develop a strong understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.

Pupils told inspectors that they receive age-appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance. Employers visit the school to highlight various career pathways. This helps to broaden pupils' ambitions and encourages them to aim high in their future lives. Pupils are well equipped to make informed choices about their next steps.

Members of the governing body know the school well. They support and challenge leaders to improve the quality of education that pupils receive in equal measure.

Leaders take positive action to support the workload and well-being of staff. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a strong safeguarding culture. They make sure that all staff, including governors, are well trained and kept up to date with any risks that pupils may face. Staff are vigilant to the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders make sure that effective arrangements are in place to identify any pupils who may need support. Records show that staff report any safeguarding concerns in a timely manner.

Leaders work with a wide variety of external agencies to provide effective support to pupils and their families. Pupils are taught and know how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects in key stage 3, leaders have not thought about the small building blocks of knowledge that are essential for pupils to learn the curriculum well. This means that some teachers are not always aware when pupils' knowledge is insecure. Leaders should ensure that in all subjects, teachers

are clear about the knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which it should be taught.

- Currently, in a small number of subjects, leaders' approaches to assessment do not enable teachers to check how well pupils have learned the knowledge that they need to progress through the curriculum. This means that, on occasion, some pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. As leaders finalise their curriculum thinking, they should ensure that approaches to assessment at key stage 3 match the knowledge in the curriculum.

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	119779
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10242472
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	900
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Murray
Headteacher	Richard Charnock
Website	www.olchs.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders use three registered alternative providers 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 school is part of the Diocese of Lancaster. The most recent section 48 inspection was in January 2018.

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 members of staff. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of 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 and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in modern foreign languages, English, geography, design technology, art and design, and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers. They also spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subject areas.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tuesday Humby	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Rix	His Majesty's Inspector
Kevin Sexton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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