

Inspection of Our Lady and St John Catholic College

North Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1PY

Inspection dates: 8–9 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Our Lady and St John Catholic College. Their behaviour is good.

Pupils say that everybody is valued in this school, regardless of their differences or beliefs. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils understand that teachers expect them to 'be ready, respectful and safe'.

Leaders' work is making a positive difference at the school. They want the best for the pupils. Leaders and teachers have reviewed the curriculum in a number of subjects to help pupils achieve better than they have in the past. Even so, there is more work needed in some subjects. Pupils have not achieved well in English because the curriculum has not been good enough. In key stage 3, pupils sometimes struggle because they are not given enough time to learn and remember new knowledge.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs. They can play sports, participate in a music group or play chess. These activities are well attended. Pupils enjoy taking part in several charity events. They are looking forward to hosting a Christmas party for local senior citizens.

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

Leaders, including governors, have taken effective action to improve the school since the previous inspection. In particular, they have made sure that pupils behave well and come to school regularly. The groundwork for the school to improve further has been completed. Still, this work is taking time to make a difference to examination results at the end of Year 11. These remain below the national average in many subjects.

Leaders have used the strong partnership with a local teaching school to share ideas across a network of schools to help them improve what is taught in different subjects.

The reshaped curriculum is organised in a logical way to help pupils build on what they have learned before. However, pupils are not always able to deepen their learning so that they can know more and remember more. This is because some teachers move through the content of the key stage 3 curriculum very quickly. Some pupils find it difficult to keep up with this pace and they start to fall behind in their learning. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

In the past, the English curriculum has lacked ambition for all pupils. The new English leader has developed a clear plan to turn this situation around. It is aimed at raising teachers' expectations and building pupils' knowledge over time. It is still

early days. The planned actions are not currently making enough of a difference to pupils' learning in this subject.

Leaders have not made reading a priority. Few pupils could talk about the books that they had read. Leaders have just opened a well-stocked library. Already, younger pupils have had the chance to enjoy story sessions. There are clear plans in place to show how this new resource will be used to enhance pupils' reading skills. These plans are recent and many of the actions have not been completed.

The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has improved the provision for pupils with SEND. The SENCo has given teachers clear guidance on how to help pupils with SEND in their lessons. Teachers value this guidance and use it to provide more effective support for these pupils on a day-to-day basis.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They are taught about British values and to appreciate differences between people in modern society. Pupils are encouraged to develop their confidence and independence through a range of after-school and lunchtime clubs and experiences. For example, pupils engage in a debating society or they can opt to be involved in garden design and maintenance.

Appropriate careers support and guidance help to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education or career. Older pupils have the opportunity to visit universities and colleges to help them choose where they would like to go when they move on to further education. For example, there are a number of visits to a local sixth-form college and university.

Pupils value their learning. Their punctuality to school and to lessons has improved considerably. Leaders use effective strategies to support pupils in managing their own behaviour. The proportion of pupils that are temporarily excluded from school has reduced considerably. This is moving rapidly towards the national average for all groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils are safe. Staff are well trained and can recognise pupils in need of help. They know how to report their concerns. Leaders provide safeguarding updates to staff when necessary. Leaders have ensured that appropriate systems are in place so that only adults who are safe to work with pupils are employed in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders should enable pupils to benefit from the curriculum in key stage 3 by ensuring that they can deepen their learning and therefore know more and remember more over time. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. This action is needed to make sure that pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4 improves. They need to do much better in GCSE examinations across a range of subjects.
- Leaders must move swiftly to ensure that the full English curriculum that is currently being developed is in place for all year groups.
- Leaders must continue to implement the reading plan. They must ensure that all pupils have access to a wide range of texts to enhance their reading skills and promote their enjoyment of reading.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	119790
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10110902
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	748
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Mike Zammit
Headteacher	Mr Peter Tite
Website	www.olsj.blackburn.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school currently uses alternative provision at St Thomas’s Centre and The Heights to contribute to the education of a small number of pupils.
- The school had a section 48 inspection in July 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke with a number of pupils about their work and school life. We held meetings with senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- We reviewed documentation, which included leaders’ evaluation of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement and the school development plan. We scrutinised information about attendance and behaviour.
- We considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 37 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, as well as parents’ comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. We considered the 23 responses to a

questionnaire for pupils and the 54 responses to a questionnaire for staff.

- We focused deeply on mathematics, geography, English and physical education during the inspection. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. We also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

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