

Loreto College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130503

Name of lead inspector: Vivien Shipley HMI

Last day of inspection: 13 November 2009

Type of provider: Sixth Form College

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Information about the provider

1. Loreto College, situated between Hulme and Moss Side in Manchester, is one of an international network of Catholic colleges run by the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a religious order founded in the seventeenth century by the Englishwoman Mary Ward. In all of its work the college aims to give expression to the core values of Mary Ward, which are: freedom, justice, sincerity, truth and joy, and to encourage 'seekers of truth and doers of justice' who are able to challenge accepted notions and modes of society. In accordance with its founding mission to serve the Catholic community of Hulme and Moss Side, the college accepts all applications from Catholic students. Two thirds of its 1,900 students come from Catholic partner high schools and from other Catholic schools in the wider Manchester area.
2. The college's student population is drawn from Manchester and surrounding local authorities including Salford, Trafford, Tameside and Derbyshire. In 2007, Manchester was ranked as the 4th most deprived out of 354 local authorities. In Manchester in 2008, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C (including English and mathematics) was 36.7% compared to a national figure of 47.2%. Over half of all students at the college receive educational maintenance allowances. The number of students enrolling at the college has increased steadily for the last eight years. Almost all students are aged 16 to 18 and are enrolled on full-time advanced level courses. The college's student population is a diverse multi-ethnic and multicultural community.
3. The college offers provision from foundation to advanced level in 10 subject areas. At advanced level 35 subjects are offered at GCE AS and A level, plus four national diploma courses and the CACHE diploma in nursery nursing. At intermediate level the college offers four GCSE subjects and three first diploma courses. At foundation level it offers two vocational courses and 'Pathways to New Horizons', a programme for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

| Type of provision | Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09 |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Provision for young learners: | |
| Further education (16 to 18) | 1,770 full-time learners 42 part-time learners |
| Foundation learning | 54 full-time learners |
| Provision for adult learners: | |
| Further education (19+) | 43 full-time learners 3 part-time learners |

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Overall effectiveness of provision | Grade 1 |
|---|----------------|

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Capacity to improve | Grade 1 |
|----------------------------|----------------|

| | Grade |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Outcomes for learners | 1 |
| Quality of provision | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 1 |
| Safeguarding | 1 |
| Equality and diversity | 1 |

| Subject Areas | Grade |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Science and mathematics | 1 |
| Visual, performing arts and media | 1 |
| English, languages and culture | 1 |
| Business, administration and law | 1 |

Overall effectiveness

4. Loreto College is outstanding in every respect. The commitment and inspirational leadership of the principal, supported by strong senior managers, has ensured that the college continues to improve, sustaining and building on the high standards seen at the previous inspection. The principal and governors place the mission at the centre of their very effective strategies for raising standards within the college and the wider community. Staff from across the college have high aspirations and expectations for students' progress and achievement and they work cohesively to ensure that they achieve challenging targets. The college has an impressive record of meeting its ambitious goals. It has an outstanding capacity to improve. Students are highly successful on the majority of courses and make exceptional progress. However, too few gain GCSE A* to C grades in English and mathematics. The proportion of students progressing to higher education is high. Very strong pastoral support from the chaplaincy and pastoral tutors ensures that students in need of support are helped. The high quality religious education and extensive enrichment

programmes develop students' social, spiritual and personal skills very well. These high achievements are significant given the low starting points of many students. The college works very hard to provide a secure and harmonious environment in which students can feel safe and develop the skills needed to be active citizens.

Main findings

- The college is successfully maintaining and extending its Catholic mission and ethos. It contributes very effectively to community cohesion and makes an increasingly influential and valuable contribution to the profile of Catholic education locally and nationally.
- Outcomes for students are outstanding. The quality of provision in all the four subject areas inspected is outstanding. Success rates have been sustained at high levels for a number of years. On the majority of subjects at GCE AS and A level and on vocational programmes students' attainment is high. Too few students taking GCSE English and mathematics gain grades A* to C.
- Students make exceptional progress during their time at Loreto. Most achieve grades higher than predicted from their prior qualifications. The college has high expectations of its students; most achieve challenging targets and progress to further and higher education or employment.
- Students make an outstanding contribution to the wider community. Large numbers give their time freely to support charitable causes, fund raising and social activities which promote social responsibility and global awareness. Their generosity, tolerance and respect for each other are exemplary.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Students thoroughly enjoy their time at the college and speak highly of their experiences and the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers skilfully use a wide range of strategies to motivate, challenge and raise students' aspirations.
- The college provides excellent academic support for students through a series of additional lessons that provide challenge to more able students and give support to those requiring additional help.
- The advanced curriculum is very broad and provision at intermediate and foundation levels provides inclusive options for students wishing to progress within the college. An extensive range of enrichment activities enhances the opportunities available for students to develop their academic, personal and social skills.
- The college's contribution to the wider community is outstanding. The concept of the 'mission on the doorstep' supports its active involvement with local Catholic primary and secondary schools, and a neighbouring college, to raise standards. The college is generous in encouraging and supporting staff to share good practice.
- Spiritual, pastoral and tutorial support are very strong. Staff from across the college work together exceptionally well to identify and support vulnerable

students and those at risk of underachieving. Well-established links with external agencies enhance the support available in college.

- Excellent guidance and support for progression to higher education raise students' aspirations. As a result of the high success rates at advanced level and the grades achieved, students' progression to university is high.
- Outstanding leadership from the principal, senior managers and governors ensures that the mission and core values of the college are at the centre of strategies for raising attainment. Together they promote successfully a harmonious and diverse community in which students thrive.
- The college works very hard to provide students with a safe and welcoming environment and to help them develop the skills to make the choices needed to stay safe and healthy. It provides excellent value for money.

What does Loreto College need to do to improve further?

- Take action to improve success rates on the very small minority of lower-performing advanced courses and the GCSE A* to C English and mathematics pass rate.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- teaching that is helpful, supportive and encouraging
- the care and support from tutors and other staff who are always there to help them
- that the college meets and often exceeds their expectations
- the very good advice and help in applying to university
- good learning resources available in the library and specialist areas
- very good access to computers and learning materials available on the college intranet that help them to study outside of lessons
- extensive opportunities to enrich their studies, including visits abroad and in England, for volunteering and for sporting activities
- supplementary subject sessions that provide them with additional help
- the opportunity to learn in a multicultural and multi-faith community, supported by the strong tutorial and religious education programme, which prepares them well for the future
- the well-planned timetable that ensures that they do not have too many gaps during the day
- that their achievements are celebrated and rewarded
- the inclusivity of the college that gives students of all abilities the opportunity to participate and succeed
- that the college raises their aspirations and self-confidence

- the constant testing and challenge that help them to make progress
- that they feel safe at the college.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the choice of food in the canteen to include a wider range of healthy and dietary options
- college buses which can be late
- the availability of sheltered areas in the college grounds
- the lack of a common room.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

5. The college has an impressive record of sustained improvement since the last inspection and consistently high standards. It sets and meets very ambitious targets and all student groups attain at levels that are significantly above national comparators. The principal and senior managers provide very strong leadership, clear strategic ambition and extremely high expectations that are shared by all staff and students. Self-assessment is rigorous and well established; quality improvement systems drive every aspect of the college's work. The views of users are central to these processes. Management structures are highly effective at driving improvement and good attention is paid to succession planning. Governors provide a high level of challenge to college managers and are very focused on monitoring the experience and outcomes for students.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

6. Students make exceptional progress during their time at college. Students come from very diverse backgrounds with varying levels of entry qualifications. Some have high GCSE results. Others have few prior qualifications, and low expectations and aspirations for their futures. From these starting points the college narrows the gap extremely well so that the majority of students successfully complete their qualifications, achieving higher grades than predicted from their previous qualifications. On some courses, such as accounting, sciences and art and design, the grades they achieve are significantly higher. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the pathways programme make very good progress developing the skills needed to become independent in, for example, being able to travel on their own and for employment.
7. Success rates have improved each year since the last inspection, significantly so at AS level, and are now high at all levels of qualifications. On GCE AS and A-level courses success rates are very high overall. However, in a very small minority of subjects, success rates are lower than the very high standards on the majority. Success rates are also high on vocational programmes. On GCSE English and mathematics the proportion of students achieving grades A* to C was low in 2009. The majority of students produce work which meets and often exceeds the standards required.
8. Students enjoy college. They progress very well between levels within the college. The proportion that progress successfully from GCE AS to A level is very high, significantly so given the starting points of many. The proportion of students progressing to higher education is high. As a result of their high attainment, students are able to apply successfully for courses which are very selective, including medicine, dentistry and physiotherapy, at high profile universities. Students also successfully progress within the college from

foundation to intermediate and advanced vocational courses and onto employment or higher education. Pathways students also progress successfully to further study, employment and higher education.

9. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the college is very good. They develop self-esteem and confidence in their abilities to succeed. Their study skills improve significantly. Students' attendance is good.
10. Students informed inspectors that they feel safe and that the very good attention to security helps to ensure that the college is a secure and welcoming environment. Through religious education and the tutorial programme they learn how to adopt healthy lifestyles and to respect each other's views and differences. They adopt safe working practices in workshops and practical sessions.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

11. Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Students speak highly of the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers plan most lessons thoroughly. They know their students very well and use information on their levels of ability to include a variety of activities in lessons that interest, inspire and challenge all. In the most effective lessons teachers use directed question and answer techniques very effectively to challenge and check students' understanding. Most teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) particularly well and this makes learning relevant and motivates students. Teachers have strong classroom management skills that maintain students' very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour.
12. Teachers set students challenging targets and monitor their progress rigorously. Students' work is marked promptly and feedback ensures that most know what they need to do to improve. Teachers are well qualified. Many use their experience as external examiners to improve the quality of learning.
13. Teachers provide excellent academic support through a series of additional lessons that are targeted to provide challenge to more able students and catch-up sessions for those having difficulty with their courses. Students who need it receive excellent support to develop their literacy, numeracy, language and study skills. Additional learning support is extensive and highly effective. Students in need of additional help are identified early and support is provided promptly. Students commented that the college saw their needs as opportunities to help, rather than barriers to achievement. They speak enthusiastically about the quality and effectiveness of the support they receive.
14. All staff from across the college work together coherently to support students to achieve. For example, science technicians and support staff provide very good services that allow teachers to concentrate on improving students' learning. The chaplaincy makes a strong contribution to the spiritual and social life of the college, providing guidance and support to all members of the college. This well

- resourced and influential team leads the college community in daily prayer and weekly mass.
15. Learning, teaching and assessment promote equality and recognise diversity exceptionally well. Students from diverse backgrounds work very well together, exchanging ideas and providing very effective peer support. Learning resources are good overall with some excellent resources in art and design and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Accommodation is mostly good but some classrooms are not suitable for large groups and this restricts the range of teaching strategies that these teachers can use.
 16. The college offers a broad and inclusive range of courses that includes provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vocational and academic options from foundation to advanced level. The college works very hard to combine options flexibly in order to meet students' individual preferences.
 17. Students make full use of an extensive enrichment programme that provides opportunities for them to extend their knowledge and life skills. These include many recreational and team sports, a choir, college radio, creative writing, debating, and justice and peace groups. In addition, subject teachers provide a wide range of exciting and imaginative trips, visits and guest speakers. For example, geography A-level students go on a field trip to Sicily, travel and tourism students go to Barcelona and art and design students visit New York.
 18. The quality of spiritual and personal education is excellent. Students speak enthusiastically about weekly religious education (RE) lessons and tutorial sessions and the opportunities these give them to discover and appreciate each other's cultures and religions and to contribute to the community. The content and focus of the RE course are based on Catholic values, presented in ways which enrich students of all faiths, or none, and of different academic abilities. Students participate in numerous community and charitable projects that develop their social and moral conscience.
 19. The college's contribution to the wider community is outstanding. It has developed particularly strong partnerships with local schools and colleges that enhance the range and quality of provision available in the local community and beyond. Well established joint working with partner schools eases transition to college for students. It has also resulted in proactive curriculum development to introduce new programmes such as the national diploma in sports that provides for 14 to 19 progression from schools. The college has also developed and coordinates a particularly innovative International Baccalaureate (IB) link programme that is offered to gifted and talented pupils from 13 local high schools and is a stepping stone to the full IB that the college intends to offer from September 2010.
 20. Information, advice and guidance are outstanding. The college offers extensive pre-course advice and guidance to help students choose the right course. Staff from across the college are focused on working together seamlessly to identify

and support students at risk of underachieving. Teachers robustly monitor students' attendance and punctuality.

21. Students speak enthusiastically about how on-line individual learning plans give them easy access to an extensive range of information on their progress. They take ownership of their own progress and learning, reviewing and amending their personal targets appropriately. They have high expectations and are constantly striving to improve. Daily tutorials and regular assemblies ensure that students are well informed about college life. Parents/carers are kept informed about the progress their son or daughter is making.
22. The college provides students with excellent guidance and support to help them progress to higher education. Opportunities for employment are promoted effectively, but not at a sufficiently early stage in students' programmes.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

23. The college is imbued at every level with a culture of high aspirations and expectations. All college staff set very challenging targets for individual learners and the college as a whole, and the college has a sustained record of achieving the overwhelming majority of its goals. The college is very responsive to local and national needs and the number of students enrolled has increased significantly. In addition to sustained improvement internally, the college provides an exceptional level of support to other organisations. The concept of the 'mission on the doorstep' has led to its active involvement in supporting another Catholic sixth form college by supplying interim leadership, until the post of principal is filled. Catholic primary schools are encouraged to make use of the college's facilities.
24. Governors and senior managers support the mission as the crucial factor in raising achievement in the widest sense. Governors monitor the conduct of the mission rigorously. The governing body provides an exceptionally clear strategic lead and monitors closely the quality of the experience for students. The standards committee rigorously examines students' achievements. They fulfil their legislative responsibilities very well. The governing body provides an excellent balance of support for the college, whilst ensuring clear accountability for senior managers.
25. Detailed and methodical analysis of performance is at the heart of self-assessment. In the context of consistently high achievement on most courses, the college is not complacent and staff take great care to evaluate constantly and plan for improvement where there is lower performance, such as on GCSE courses. The impact of quality assurance and self-assessment is clear in year-on-year improvements that have taken place in success rates and the management of the college, which are outstanding. Arrangements for sharing good practice are excellent.

26. Promotion of equality and diversity permeates the college and has been well established for several years. As part of the forensic examination of data on students' achievements, the college identifies any variations in performance between different groups and takes very effective action. In 2008/09 there were no significant differences in the attainment of any groups. The college makes an exceptional contribution to community cohesion. Students are very positive about the culture of respect in the college and the opportunities to develop their understanding of different cultures. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to fulfil legal requirements and the college's equality and diversity committee plays a very active role in monitoring their impact, as well as ensuring excellent promotion of equality and diversity throughout the curriculum. Very effective strategies are in place to ensure that teaching and learning are adapted to meet the needs of individuals and different groups of learners. Innovative arrangements for staff development ensure that students have a direct say in what helps them to learn. In conjunction with social services, the college has developed a programme for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which is providing very successfully for their needs.
27. Governors and managers place very high priority on safeguarding. The college has comprehensive arrangements for identifying vulnerable young people very early in their courses through strong links with partner high schools and very effective induction procedures. Strong pastoral support from staff across the college ensures that those at risk are also identified promptly during their time at college. Extensive experience of supporting vulnerable students with high quality services available in college and through well-established links with many external agencies ensures that those in need are helped quickly and effectively. Procedures to identify and support vulnerable young people are supported by up-to-date policies for safe recruitment and appropriate checks on staff. All staff are well trained in safeguarding. The college deploys significant resources to provide a secure and welcoming environment. Policies and procedures for health and safety are robust. Students develop safe working practices through the curriculum and how to stay safe is a key part of tutorial sessions. Monitoring of incidents and near misses indicate that the college provides a safe learning environment.
28. User views are used effectively to promote improvement. The college considers students' views seriously. Student governors make a valuable contribution to board meetings. The student council plays a very active role in collecting opinions and presenting findings to the college management team. Students speak enthusiastically about changes that take place as a result of their input, for example, in reviewing teaching and learning styles. Employers are involved particularly well in the development of the pathways provision and vocational courses. They also contribute to subject enrichment, careers advice and the provision of awards and bursaries that support and motivate students.
29. The college provides excellent value for money. It has high levels of student recruitment. Staffing costs are comparatively low and the college achieves excellent outcomes for students, particularly so in the context of the relatively

low prior attainment of many. Financial management is outstanding and capital projects are very well managed. The standard of accommodation and resources is generally very good and the final phase of the building programme is on target for completion in spring 2010. The college has invested significantly in specialist equipment for learners with physical disabilities.

Subject areas

Science and mathematics

Grade 1

Context

30. There are around 2,100 enrolments on science and mathematics courses at intermediate and advanced levels. Subjects offered include GCE AS and A levels in biology, chemistry, further mathematics, mathematics, physics and psychology, and GCSE courses in science and mathematics.

Key findings

- Success rates on advanced courses are outstanding. On GCE AS and A-level courses success rates have risen over the last three years and are now very high for all subjects. The proportion of students achieving grades A and B is also very high in all subjects. However, the proportion of students attaining GCSE A* to C in mathematics and science has declined over the last three years and is satisfactory.
- Students on GCE AS and A-level courses make exceptional progress. They achieve significantly higher grades than predicted from their prior qualifications.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers plan lessons to include coherent activities that develop all students' skills and knowledge. Activities are well sequenced and appropriately timed. Additional lessons provide extra support for students who need it and additional challenge for others.
- Students produce work of a high standard on almost all courses. They develop the ability to link scientific theory to practical aspects effectively. They work very productively and co-operatively in practical lessons and develop safe laboratory practice.
- Teachers provide excellent academic support for students. They are generous with their time outside lessons to help students. Extra support and revision sessions are provided outside timetabled lessons and these, combined with the rigorous monitoring of performance, help to raise students' attainment. Students commented that this was something that they particularly enjoyed about the college.
- Teachers monitor students' progress rigorously. They closely evaluate students' performance against their target grades. Progress is recorded using an on-line system that students find very useful in helping them to take responsibility for their own learning. Students in need of help are promptly identified and followed up swiftly and relentlessly. Action is consistent and tenacious, and, if appropriate, concerns are referred to the principal who sees students individually.
- The quality of assessment of GCSE mathematics work varies. Some teachers provide very detailed comments that help students understand what they need to do to improve, but in other cases feedback is limited.

- Care, guidance and support are excellent. Strong links between pastoral tutors and subject teachers are very effective in helping raise students' attainment. All staff work cohesively to ensure that students are supported both academically and pastorally.
- A broad range of subject options is enhanced by an extensive range of enrichment activities. A wide range of subject-specific activities complements college-wide activities. These include field trips and visits abroad and to higher education institutions.
- Progression rates to higher education are high. The high success rates at AS level provide students with excellent opportunities to progress to A level and to widen their future career options. Students commented on the high expectations and support the college provides to help them progress to university.
- Curriculum management is very good. Quality assurance systems are systematic and comprehensive. Staff set high standards and are self-critical. Technician support is very good and efficiently supports teachers to deliver well-organised practical sessions. Laboratories are new and well equipped but can be cramped when occupied by large groups.

What does Loreto College need to do to improve further?

- Review and evaluate the curriculum for students resitting GCSE mathematics and science, and implement appropriate strategies to improve the A* to C pass rate.

Visual and performing arts, and media

Grade 1

Context

31. The college provides advanced level courses for just over 900 enrolled students aged 16 to 18. GCE AS and A-level courses are offered in the full range of art and design options including photography, textiles and graphics. Courses are also offered in film, media, dance, drama and music. The vast majority of students are enrolled on art and design subjects.

Key findings

- Students successfully attain their learning goals and meet challenging targets. Success rates on most full-time courses have been very high since the last inspection. On GCE AS-level art and design, media studies and film studies, success rates are outstanding. Success rates on AS and A-level music were low in 2009.
- Students make exceptional progress. On most courses they achieve significantly higher grades than predicted from their prior qualifications. The proportion of students gaining grades A and B is high on all AS and A-level art and design subjects and AS-level dance.
- The standard of students' work is very high. Their performances, portfolios and displayed work show that they develop very good technical skills and contextual knowledge. They are able to relate their work to that of historical and contemporary practitioners. For example, art and design students study the work of John Piper to support an architectural print project. Students develop safe working practices in art and design workshops and performing arts studios.
- Students enjoy college and feel confident in recommending it to others. They learn to respect each other's contributions and work very effectively in teams. Students express great satisfaction with the safe and supportive community the college offers them.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers use a variety of techniques and activities that motivate and interest students very well. They use detailed information about students' learning needs and progress to provide individualised support. Teachers provide students with regular positive feedback for their contributions in lessons that significantly improves their self-confidence.
- Teachers monitor students' progress extremely well and readily give their time to provide support outside lessons. Students informed inspectors that teachers mark and return their work promptly. They understand what they need to do to improve and learn to meet deadlines. Students are able to work in art studios during free periods to complete practical work and extra catch-up sessions are provided for those who need them.

- Teaching, learning and assessment promote equality and support diversity exceptionally well. Students from a variety of cultures, social backgrounds and range of abilities benefit from studying together. Those who would not otherwise participate, as they have been denied places at other establishments, are also provided with the opportunity to study and the support needed to succeed.
- A very broad range of GCE AS and A-level subjects are offered. These are enhanced by an extensive range of enrichment activities, including visits to local theatres, museums and galleries. In addition, students told inspectors about how much they enjoyed and gained from the bi-annual trip to New York.
- Teachers prepare students very well for progression to higher education. They receive very good help to prepare interview portfolios and are supported to visit university art and design degree exhibitions. However, help for those wishing to secure employment is more limited.
- Course management is outstanding. Managers successfully promote a culture of high expectations of staff and students. Regular staff team meetings are focused on monitoring performance against challenging targets. Strong team working between teachers and pastoral tutors ensures that students at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and supported fully.
- Most learning resources and accommodation are excellent. Art and design students benefit from working in light and airy studios with industry standard computers. Performing arts is taught in a well-equipped theatre with a full lighting rig, retractable audience seating and digital projection facilities. New accommodation, opening early next year, will enhance facilities further.

What does Loreto College need to do to improve further?

- Regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of current improvement strategies and develop new actions where needed, to ensure that success rates increase on the small minority of lower performing subjects.

English, languages and culture

Grade 1

Context

32. The provision for students, who are mostly aged 16 to 18, includes 437 enrolments on GCE AS and A-level courses in English and 211 on GCSE English. 136 students are enrolled on GCE AS and A-level courses in French, German, Spanish and classical civilisation.

Key findings

- Students' outcomes are outstanding on most courses. Success rates on the majority of GCE AS and A-level subjects have been high since the last inspection. The proportion of students gaining grades A and B has been consistently high in most subjects, apart from the two AS-level English options. The English GCSE A* to C pass rate fell in 2008/09 and is low.
- Overall, students' achievements are significantly better than might be expected from their previous attainment. On all subjects students make at least the progress expected and on many courses progress is very good. On A-level classical civilisation, English literature, German and French, students' progress is excellent.
- Students produce high standards of work, they enjoy college and their attendance at lessons is very good. They confidently respond to teachers' questions and are generous in their support for each other in group work. The quality of written work demonstrates their growing independence of thought.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teaching is scholarly, dynamic and purposeful in most lessons. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and are skilful in managing tasks that challenge and develop all students' abilities. For example, in a particularly effective English lesson, the teacher helped students to unpick the linguistic complexities of Pinter's dialogue.
- Teachers of modern foreign languages provide regular opportunities for students to practise their spoken language skills to prepare for oral examinations. The use of information and learning technology by teachers of French is exceptional. Teachers of classical civilisation use probing questions designed to challenge and check students' understanding of unfamiliar subjects in Greek literature. In one lesson the teacher created an enjoyable experience for the students and helped them to see the relevance of the story of *Oedipus the King* to modern times.
- Care, guidance and support are excellent. Students express appreciation of teachers and tutors, all of whom take extra time to address their concerns or difficulties.
- A wide range of GCE AS and A-level subjects meets the needs of students very well. The GCSE English course provides an option at an appropriate level for most students. However, for some students for whom English is not their first

language suitable provision to support them to progress to GCSE is not available.

- Management of the area is outstanding. Teachers are well qualified and use their skills to promote the good of the whole team. Managers hold regular meetings in which teachers share expertise, including their experiences as examiners. Sound reflection on students' progress is also a focus for meetings, particularly in relation to their writing skills and examination techniques. Where there are problems, prompt action generally resolves the issues.

What does Loreto College need to do to improve further?

- The college should develop more robust arrangements for the initial advice and guidance of students prior to enrolment on English GCSE so as to improve the grade A* to C pass rate. Alternative options should be made available to support those who have fundamental difficulties with English.

Business, administration and law

Grade 1

Context

33. Around 190 students are enrolled on GCE A level and 330 on AS-level courses in accounting, business studies and law. Most are aged 16 to 18 and all are full time.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are outstanding. Success rates across most subjects have been sustained at very high levels over the last three years. On all GCE A-level subjects success rates are extremely high. On accounting all students have succeeded for the last three years. On AS-level subjects in accounting and business studies pass rates are consistently high. Retention rates are consistently high.
- A high proportion of students achieve grades A and B. On A-level accounting more than two thirds of students gain a high grade. On both A-level business studies and law half reach this level. On AS-level accounting almost four times the national average achieve a high grade.
- Students enjoy learning and make significantly better progress than their prior attainment would indicate. Many start their courses with modest prior achievements and go on to achieve very well. Students attend well and are punctual.
- Students produce high standards of work. They have a sound grasp of key principles and are articulate in explaining what they are learning both orally and in writing. They are able to use specialist terminology accurately at a level appropriate to their studies. Their personal and social skills develop significantly. They are self-confident and work well together, showing respect for each other's opinions. Most progress to higher education.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are very good. Teachers use a wide range of interesting and appropriate activities that enthuse learners, maintain their interest and prepare them effectively for examinations. Examples from the real world give immediacy and relevance to lessons, such as the reasons for a major supermarket locating in nearby Hulme. A few classrooms are too small for the number of students and this restricts the range of strategies teachers are able to use.
- Teachers monitor students' progress thoroughly. Students are well informed about their progress and how they can improve. Further support is provided to those who are perceived to be at risk of not reaching their full potential. This includes extra sessions to stretch and challenge them, helping them to achieve high grades.
- The range of subjects offered is excellent. The broad range of business-related courses allows students to select subjects that are new to them. As a consequence some refine or alter their chosen career path, for example, from

business studies to economics. Students benefit from a good choice of enrichment activities.

- Students receive very good guidance for progression to higher education. College staff pay very good attention to ensuring that students treat each other with respect. Students commented upon their confidence in the quality of care and support they receive from staff to ensure that they feel safe and make progress in their studies.
- Management of the subject area is outstanding. Managers monitor and evaluate performance carefully and devise appropriate strategies to resolve issues.

What does Loreto College need to do to improve further?

- Take advantage of the opportunities available when the new accommodation is completed to review and use a wider range of teaching and learning methods.

Information about the inspection

34. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by one of the college's assistant principals, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring, and data on students and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.
35. Inspectors used evidence from group and individual interviews, and emails from students. They also observed lessons and tutorials. Inspectors collected evidence from most of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Loreto College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

| Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate | Overall | 16-18 Learner responsive | 19+ Learner responsive |
|--|----------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Approximate number of enrolled learners | | | |
| Full-time learners | 1,813 | 1,770 | 43 |
| Part-time learners | 45 | 42 | 3 |
| Overall effectiveness | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Capacity to improve | 1 | | |
| Outcomes for learners | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning? | 1 | | |
| How well do learners attain their learning goals? | 1 | | |
| How well do learners progress? | 1 | | |
| How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development? | 1 | | |
| How safe do learners feel? | 1 | | |
| <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i> | 1 | | |
| <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i> | 1 | | |
| Quality of provision | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development? | 1 | | |
| How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users? | 1 | | |
| How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners? | 1 | | |
| How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve? | 1 | | |
| Leadership and management | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation? | 1 | | |
| <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i> | 1 | | |
| How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners? | 1 | | |
| How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap? | 1 | | |
| How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement? | 1 | | |
| How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners? | 1 | | |
| How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money? | 1 | | |

*where applicable to the type of provision

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