

De Lisle College Loughborough Leicestershire

Address: Thorpe Hill, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 4SQ

Unique reference number (URN): 138298

Inspection report: 6 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a culture of very high expectations for attendance. Overall, pupils' attendance is above average. The rates of attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are above the national average. Sustained, notable improvements mean that disadvantaged pupils' attendance is now around the national average. There are clear systems in place to follow up attendance concerns. Leaders analyse attendance information rigorously and identify patterns and trends. They work closely with families and provide tailored support where needed. They act quickly when pupils start to miss learning. This has led to improvements over time.

Pupils consistently meet leaders' high expectations of behaviour. Routines are embedded, including 'standing assembly' at the beginning of each school day. This ensures that pupils settle quickly into their learning. Across the school, pupils' behaviour is consistently calm and respectful. Pupils engage well with their learning and show positive attitudes to their work. Pupils' positive conduct is routinely recognised and rewarded. Younger pupils particularly value the rewards they get, such as 'the golden ticket'. Staff apply behaviour systems consistently and make sensible adjustments for pupils with SEND. Pupils feel supported and safe. There are established systems for pupils to raise any concerns about bullying. While this is rare, staff act on issues promptly when they arise.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

There is an inclusive culture in the school. Staff are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders quickly identify additional needs that pupils have. They use a range of information to enhance pupils' experiences. Strategies to support pupils' wellbeing are particularly effective. This ensures that all pupils can access their learning and make progress from their starting points.

Staff receive high-quality training. They understand pupils' pastoral needs well, including those of pupils who are known to social care and those with SEND. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely. They check that support has an impact and adapt strategies when needed. Leaders work closely with families and other professionals to support pupils effectively and to ensure they receive appropriate help. This enables pupils to participate fully in school life.

Leaders prioritise the experience and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They use additional funding effectively to provide further support and experiences. For example, additional careers guidance is provided to ensure that all pupils secure appropriate next steps. This targeted support is purposeful and personalised. Leaders monitor the progress, safety and wellbeing of pupils who attend alternative provision closely.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's ethos is at the core of the personal development and wellbeing programme. Leaders' ambition to extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom is clear. This reflects their

high ambition for all pupils. As a result, pupils are well prepared for future employment, education and adult life.

Leaders ensure that there is a well-sequenced and purposeful curriculum for personal, social and health education. It is carefully designed to complement the school's values. Leaders have adapted the programme to reflect the pupils' needs. This includes an increased focus on mental health. Pupils know how to stay safe in the community and online. They develop detailed knowledge in their personal development sessions. Pupils are knowledgeable about life in modern Britain.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Leaders have prioritised pupil care, including providing additional staff to support wellbeing. Staff know pupils well. Pastoral staff develop meaningful relationships with families over time. This means that barriers are swiftly identified, and pupils are supported well to fully engage with their learning.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities beyond the curriculum, including international visits. Pupils enjoy these activities. Leaders are proactive in ensuring that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, access a wide range of enrichment opportunities. This includes providing opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities during the afternoon 'prep' session. As a result, a high proportion of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, take part in additional activities. This helps them to develop their talents and interests.

Careers education is high quality. The school's careers programme includes regular and helpful one-to-one guidance, visits and encounters with employers. Pupils, including students in the post-16 provision, receive balanced and appropriate advice. It provides pupils with important knowledge to make well-informed decisions about their next steps.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils develop secure knowledge over time. Consistent routines ensure that pupils learn with confidence. Key stage 4 examination results have typically been above national averages. More recently, disadvantaged pupils have achieved in line with national averages. Leaders have taken steps to address this. In the sixth form, attainment has been in line with national averages over time. This means that pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Pupils produce work that reflects their secure understanding of the curriculum. When checks of learning are effective, pupils demonstrate detailed knowledge. Some pupils make mistakes in their work. These are not always identified quickly. When this is the case, gaps in learning do not close as quickly as they could.

Most pupils have secure knowledge of the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics required to support their learning. Pupils who have not yet secured these basic skills are supported effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is well designed. It builds pupils' knowledge and skills effectively over time. Therefore, pupils generally achieve well. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training that supports teaching. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. This is used effectively. For example, explanations are clear and accurate.

Typically, the curriculum is taught well. Teachers use familiar routines to support learning. This includes whole-class strategies designed to support pupils with lower starting points. Learning activities generally support pupils to make progress. However, at times, some adaptations to learning do not support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to progress as quickly as they could. Teachers use a range of strategies to regularly check pupils' understanding. Typically, these are effective. However, occasionally, teachers do not identify errors in pupils' work or when they have misconceptions. This means that some pupils do not learn quickly from their mistakes.

Targeted teaching is provided for pupils who have not yet secured the basic skills required for learning, for example, in handwriting and reading. This is effective.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

School and trust leaders have a clear ambition to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. They model high expectations and they are committed to a caring and supportive ethos. Leaders have established a positive environment based on effective routines. This has led to notable improvements in pupils' attendance. Leaders ensure that pupils settle into their learning quickly.

Leaders build productive relationships with parents and carers. For example, they hold a variety of events to listen to parents' views and to reiterate and share their high expectations. As a result, most parents are supportive of leaders' actions to ensure positive pupil behaviour.

Knowledgeable governors meet their statutory duties effectively. They share leaders' accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Leaders' actions are suitably focused on these priorities. Regular reviews ensure that these actions have a positive impact over time. Leaders work effectively with professionals outside the school to enhance the support that pupils receive. They also share their knowledge and experience to help develop other leaders beyond the school community.

Leaders prioritise ongoing professional learning to develop staff's expertise. This training is appropriately focused on the school's priority areas, such as ensuring consistency in teaching across all years so all pupils achieve well. Staff in the early stages of their career receive effective training and support. Staff feel valued and supported by leaders. They enjoy working at the school.

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum for sixth-form students. Academic and vocational qualifications meet students' needs and aspirations. This provides suitable routes to students' next steps.

Students enjoy attending the sixth form. Leaders promote helpful study habits. This ensures that students are committed to their learning. As a result, sixth-form lessons are purposeful. Leaders know students well and provide effective support for those who need it. Typically, teaching is effective. Teachers have good subject knowledge and share enthusiasm for learning with students. They use their knowledge to explain complex content clearly. This means that many pupils produce high-quality work in lessons. Outcomes are broadly in line with national averages.

The enrichment programme develops students' confidence and ambitions. The personal development programme ensures that students are prepared for life after school. There is a distinctive community ethos within the sixth form. Students act as positive role models for younger pupils. They contribute positively to the school community. Careers education is effective. Students value the advice and guidance they are given. Close monitoring and personalised guidance secure positive destinations. This provision prepares students well for their futures.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a calm and caring school, where they feel valued and well supported. The school's mission to be 'rooted and grounded in love' shapes the school environment. There are very high expectations of behaviour and attendance. As a result, pupils behave incredibly well and regularly attend school.

Pupils benefit from a high-quality curriculum that builds their knowledge over time. Pupils are attentive in lessons. They can get on with their learning without disruption. Those who face barriers to their learning know that staff will help them overcome these. This is especially the case when pupils require additional wellbeing support.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Many pupils produce good-quality work. At key stage 4, many pupils achieve above the national average. Sixth-form students gain the qualifications they need to move on to higher-level studies, employment or training. While students achieve well overall, attainment at A level is not consistently above the national average. Leaders' improvement actions focus sharply on continuing to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and overall post-16 outcomes.

Pastoral care is highly effective. Pupils demonstrate positive relationships with each other. They understand the importance of kindness and respect. As a result, bullying is rare. Pupils have confidence that staff will address issues if they arise. This means that pupils feel that school is a safe space.

The school's values are closely aligned with preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders have ensured that all pupils can access a wide range of opportunities that support

their development beyond the curriculum. This includes opportunities that are provided during the school day. Therefore, many pupils take part in additional activities. The careers programme ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the checks used to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning are used consistently across the curriculum so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching strategies are skilfully adapted so that any barriers to achievement are swiftly and effectively addressed.
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About this inspection

This school is part of St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Neil Lockyer (CEO), and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Noon.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the CEO and other trust and school leaders and during the inspection. Inspectors spoke to those responsible for governance.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Nottingham. Its last section 48 inspection was in June 2024

The school currently makes use of 10 alternative provisions, including 9 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Chris Maher

Lead inspector:

Helen Loader, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Martyn Skinner, Ofsted Inspector

Joanne Ward, Ofsted Inspector

Damian Painton, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Walton, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 6 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,339

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,308

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

15.67%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.49%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.16%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	60.0%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63.3%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67.3%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	55.1	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	54.1	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	56.3	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.58	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.74	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	25.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43.3%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	48.3%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	36.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40.4	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	43.0	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.06	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.09	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	25.0%	53.1%	-28.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	43.3%	53.1%	-9.8 pp
2022/23 (final)	48.3%	52.4%	-4.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	36.6	50.4	-13.8
2023/24 (final)	40.4	50.0	-9.6
2022/23 (final)	43.0	50.3	-7.3

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.06	0.16	-0.22
2022/23 (final)	-0.09	0.17	-0.26

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	94%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.44	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.39	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.80	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.2%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.6%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	15.0%	23.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	17.2%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	19.0%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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