

Inspection of a good school: Our Lady's RC High School

Alworth Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester M9 0RP

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

Our Lady's RC High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Our Lady's RC High School are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils are happy. They said that they feel safe. They are confident that if bullying should occur, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils behave well and move purposefully around the school. They treat each other with respect regardless of race, gender or culture. Pupils said that the '3Cs' behaviour code helps teachers to manage behaviour fairly.

Teachers expect pupils to do their best. Pupils work diligently to meet the high expectations that teachers have for their learning. They value the support that their teachers give them. Pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils moving on to further education, employment or training after school is improving steadily.

Pupils said that they enjoy the variety of clubs that are on offer after school and at lunchtime. For example, pupils attend the STEM club and the boxing club. They also appreciate researching relevant current issues in the debating club. In particular, younger pupils were pleased that leaders ensured that their residential trip went ahead, despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Leaders and governors have improved the curriculum considerably. The key stage 3 curriculum now matches the breadth and depth of the national curriculum. Leaders' aspirations are reflected in the high proportion of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Subject teachers use their expertise to consider the best ways to deliver the curriculum. Teachers appreciate the time that leaders give them to think deeply about how pupils learn. Through this work, teachers have further developed their subject knowledge and

improved their delivery of the curriculum. For example, teachers are skilled in linking new learning to information that pupils already know. Pupils said that this helps them to remember more.

Subject leaders have ensured that pupils' learning is well ordered so that pupils build on what they already know and can do. Pupils progress well through the planned curriculum. They can talk in detail about the subject content that they have learned. Pupils are proud of the work that they produce.

Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of education on offer at the school. In many subjects, the curriculum is well planned and delivered effectively. In most subjects, teachers use assessment well to identify pupils' misconceptions or forgotten learning. Teachers then carefully adapt the curriculum so that they can help pupils to catch up. Year 11 pupils value the catch-up sessions that take place after school. Attendance for these sessions is high. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers are less well equipped to use assessment strategies to check on pupils' learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are identified accurately. They make sure that teachers have the information that they need to support pupils with SEND to access the planned curriculum. Pupils with SEND are now achieving better than they did in the past.

Leaders have put in place a strong programme of support to help pupils to improve their reading. Pupils who find reading difficult benefit from individualised reading plans. This is helping these pupils to access the wider curriculum. All pupils engage in group reading during form time. They read a variety of texts, such as newspapers, informational articles and books, confidently and fluently.

Pupils value their learning. Attendance is high and pupils are rarely excluded from school. Pupils behave well in all areas of the school. They show respect for each other's views and opinions.

Pupils learn how to have healthy relationships. They said that they understand the importance of consent. Pupils value democracy and see it at work in the school council. They understand the impact of prejudice on others.

Teachers are proud to work in the school. They said that leaders are considerate of the work that they do.

Governors understand their role. They bring a range of skills to school leadership. Leaders and staff work together well to support the community that they serve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff place pupils at the heart of everything that they do. Staff are well trained to recognise the signs that pupils may be

at risk of harm. Leaders act quickly to secure the timely help and support those pupils and their families need. Leaders work effectively with external agencies.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the dangers that they face while online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers' assessment processes do not identify the knowledge that pupils have not learned or forgotten. This means that in these subjects, some teachers do not have all of the information that they need to help pupils to improve their work. Leaders should ensure that teachers' assessment processes in all subjects identify the key knowledge that pupils are missing. This will allow teachers to address forgotten knowledge more effectively, which, in turn, will aid pupils' progress.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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	105576
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10204449
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	908
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Campbell
Headteacher	Lee Ormsby
Website	www.olhs-manchester.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	31 January and 1 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at three local providers.
- Our Lady's RC High School is a Catholic school. The last inspection of the denominational education given to pupils and the content of the school's collective act of worship under section 48 of the education Act 2005 took place on 29 June 2016.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff and the chair of the local governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the Diocese of Salford, the local authority and the school improvement partner.

- Inspectors spoke to pupils 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.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding and considered parents' views.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and French. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work, and had discussions with teachers and small groups of pupils.

Inspection team

Erica Sharman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Elaine Parkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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