

# Inspection of a good school: Highgate Wood Secondary School

Montenotte Road, London N8 8RN

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Inspection dates:

17 and 18 November 2021

## Outcome

Highgate Wood Secondary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Highgate Wood feel safe and well cared for. The school has a strong sense of community among pupils and staff. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils in the school. They ensure that pupils of all ages can study a broad range of subjects.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well in lessons. They are committed learners who want to achieve. The slow movement of some pupils to lessons after breaktime can delay learning. Pupils show respect for each other and the school celebrates the diversity of its community. Pupils say that staff do not tolerate bullying. Leaders are passionate about building a school with a culture of inclusion at its heart. Pupils and staff action the school's motto of 'Everyone Matters' in everything they do.

Reading for pleasure is a central part of school life. Dedicated reading time gives each morning a calm and focused start. Sixth-form students are mature role models who support the reading of younger pupils. Since the start of the new term in September, leaders have been working hard to reinstate the offer of enrichment clubs and trips. Pupils in Year 8 have used a trip along the London Parkland Walk as the basis for creative writing in English.

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

Leaders and staff have high ambitions for all pupils. They have spent time making learning more relevant to pupils in the school. In English, for example, pupils study poetry and texts from a rich variety of authors. In history, KS3 pupils learn about how people lived in the Islamic and African worlds during the middle ages. Leaders are proud of the destinations of pupils leaving the sixth form. The increasing numbers of pupils choosing to study in the sixth form is a sign of its success.

Subject leaders have given careful thought to the sequence of the curriculum. Pupils build their understanding of key ideas over time. Teachers are specialists in their subjects. They plan lessons which help pupils to make connections between the different parts of their

learning. In textiles, for example, pupils learn about different types of seams. Using this knowledge, they make designs that increase in complexity. In French, pupils write with confidence using sophisticated grammar and vocabulary.

Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to recall their learning at the start of each lesson. These opportunities help pupils to remember content from their recent lessons. In science, pupils used what they know about compounds to understand the use of alloys in cutlery. In mathematics, pupils remember the process of simplifying expressions ready to solve problems in geometry. Teachers are swift to correct misconceptions. They use different types of assessment to check what pupils have understood.

Pupils can struggle to remember essential key knowledge with accuracy. They do not always use subject-specific vocabulary. When this happens, teachers adapt their teaching so that all pupils are ready to move on together. Pupils work hard in lessons, even when they struggle. Lessons have a focused and purposeful atmosphere. Teachers are quick to address any low-level disruption.

Pupils learn to engage with the wider world around them. Leaders expect pupils to be responsible, critical citizens. In art, pupils use their work to express their views on global issues. Pupils have opportunities to lead and take part in fundraising events for local charities. 'Debate Mate' is a popular enrichment activity among pupils.

At all ages, the school encourages pupils to develop their leadership skills. The school runs mentoring programmes where pupils support each other's learning. Pupils are working with staff and governors to make the school more sustainable. The school has a 'Life Skills' curriculum to support pupils' wider development in key stage 3. Pupils in the school are well-prepared for their next steps in education. They make informed choices at key transition points.

The school has recently restructured its support for pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities. Specialist support staff work with teachers to make learning more accessible. Pupils experience a range of group and individual interventions to support their learning. The new Maya Angelou centre provides a space to support the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils in the school. Leaders continue to extend the breadth of subjects on offer in the sixth form to make it more inclusive.

Leaders and governors support the well-being of staff and pupils. There is a strong cohesion between staff from different departments in the school. Staff say that leaders support them with their workload and are responsive to their requests. They said they are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has clear procedures for reporting concerns and staff know how to use them. All staff receive regular safeguarding training. Leaders are reflective and review their

practice to strengthen safeguarding arrangements as necessary. The school carries out thorough checks when recruiting new staff.

Pupils know how to stay safe, including online. They receive age-appropriate lessons on issues around consent and sexual harassment. Pupils trust the adults in the school and know how to get help if they need to. Leaders are quick to identify pupils who may need support, and they work well with outside partners, such as the local authority.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils embed key knowledge in their long-term memory. Pupils struggle to retrieve the prior knowledge and do not always use subject vocabulary accurately. Leaders should ensure that pupils can recall key knowledge with fluency.
- At the end of social times, some pupils can be slow to follow instructions about moving to lessons. Delays caused to the start of lessons can impact the learning of other pupils in the class. Leaders should teach pupils to take more responsibility for their behaviour.

## **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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102154
<b>Local authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204470
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1562
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	281
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Elizabeth Hess Barth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patrick Cozier
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hws.haringey.sch.uk">www.hws.haringey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The Maya Angelou Centre is a new resource base located at the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This is 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, two deputy headteachers and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with six members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke to the school improvement partner from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, art, design and technology, and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject teachers.
- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. They also looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks carried out before appointing staff.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils in lessons and social time to consider their views on the school. Inspectors considered the well-being and behaviour of pupils during lesson visits and around the school. They also visited tutor groups during reading time.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, including early career teachers and support staff, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View and free-text responses from 274 parents and carers. They also took account of the responses from 64 staff and 88 pupils to the Ofsted survey.

### **Inspection team**

Annabel Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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