

Inspection of Ursuline High School Wimbledon

Crescent Road, Wimbledon, London SW20 8HA

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged outstanding under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of the school community. Pupils feel safe and supported because of strong relationships between staff and pupils. Leaders and staff aim to nurture pupils' unique talents and interests. Pupils relish the wide range of clubs and societies on offer.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are committed to their learning and achieve well.

Teachers encourage pupils to connect their learning to the world around them. Pupils discuss complex issues, such as climate change and social justice, with confidence and maturity. In a few subjects, leaders have not planned the curriculum as carefully. This means that, on occasions, some pupils do not learn and remember as much as they could.

Governors and leaders pay great attention to pupils' well-being. Pupils show respect and kindness towards each other. Bullying does not happen often. When it does happen, staff deal with it well.

Pupils embody the school motto of 'serviam'. Pupils define this as developing the gifts and talents of individuals for the common good. Sixth-form students help younger pupils to explore their career options. Pupils are confident and ambitious for their futures.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that includes a broad range of subjects. They provide a curriculum which prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain. For example, in English and music, pupils study works from a wide range of cultures. In science and geography, pupils enjoy discussing global issues, such as climate change.

In Years 7 to 11, most subjects are planned thoroughly. This ensures that pupils' understanding develops well. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not thought as carefully about what it is they want pupils to learn and remember. Sometimes, this means that teachers' use of assessment does not focus sharply on the specific things that all pupils should know. As a result, pupils find it harder to remember key concepts that they have covered in class both recently and in previous years.

Leaders are skilled in identifying and supporting pupils with SEND. Staff know how to support pupils well. This support enables pupils with SEND, including sixth-form students, to access the curriculum. Leaders make sure that weaker readers get effective extra help. Pupils' joy in reading is evident. They told inspectors about the regular visits from different authors, for example, and how these inspire them to read more.

Pupils listen to staff well and learn from one another. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Leaders help pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Exclusions are rare. Pupils attend well and arrive promptly at school.

Leaders are committed to pupils' well-being. A well-qualified team provides excellent support for pupils' mental health. Pupils know they are cared for. Leaders listen to pupils and act on their feedback. For example, pupils contribute to the school's work on relationships and sex education. The result is a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme.

Staff and leaders provide a huge range of clubs, societies and educational visits. They make sure that all pupils can access the opportunities on offer. Pupils enjoy taking part in music lessons, theatre trips and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, for example. Leaders provide a structured programme of careers guidance. Pupils can learn about the world of work and their options. For example, they have visits from different employers and attend talks by leaders from a range of careers. Leaders and staff aim to nurture pupils' ambition from the beginning of their time at the school. By the time they leave, pupils have clear and bold plans for their future.

Teachers in the sixth form expect the very best from their students. They use their subject expertise to check students' understanding and deepen their knowledge. Students write and speak with maturity, explaining their learning in depth. They understand and use technical and specialist vocabulary, including in vocational subjects. Students have lively debates and discussions in lessons such as PSHE. Teachers check pupils' understanding of important knowledge, for instance what they have learned in relationships and sex education. Students told inspectors that this gives them confidence to speak up about issues that matter to them.

Knowledgeable governors support and challenge the school with rigour. Like the school's leaders, they care about pupils' well-being and find out about pupils' experiences of the school. This commitment to well-being extends to teachers. Teachers enjoy working here because they feel valued by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable about the local risks to their pupils. They work closely with external agencies, including the police, to keep pupils safe.

Leaders and carefully selected external partners provide high-quality training to all staff. Staff know how to deal with any concerns about pupils. Leaders make sure that these are recorded and followed up promptly.

Teaching about healthy relationships begins as soon as pupils join the school and continues until students leave the sixth form. Leaders use information from their

surveys of pupils' views to shape the guidance provided in the curriculum. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe outside of school and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not planned the curriculum as precisely. This means that teachers are not fully clear on the key knowledge that all pupils must learn. Sometimes, teaching does not identify and revisit the knowledge and concepts that pupils need to be secure with. Leaders should strengthen curriculum planning in these subjects so that teachers know exactly what all pupils need to learn and can check that pupils have understood this learning well.

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	102683
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10199320
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1395
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Thorogood
Headteacher	Julia Waters
Website	www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 November 2006 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's last section 48 inspection took place on 26 and 27 April 2018.
- The school currently uses two alternative providers.
- Students in the sixth form attend some lessons at Wimbledon College, Edge Hill, London SW19 4NS.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and curriculum leaders, and governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff. They also spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered 152 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 347 responses to the pupil survey and the 49 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Stephen Adcock, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Anne Murray-Hudson	Ofsted Inspector
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