

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

6-16 Amhurst Park, Stamford Hill, London N16 5AF

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Our Lady's Catholic High School are confident and keen to express their views. They have a clear sense of what is right and wrong. Leaders promote diversity and equality and pupils enjoy learning about issues that relate to their own lives.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils, and pupils behave well in lessons. They listen to teachers, ask questions to improve their understanding and work hard. Teachers help pupils when they find work difficult and praise pupils for their achievements. Pupils value this.

Outside of lessons, pupils sometimes do not meet leaders' expectations. Pupils' behaviour towards each other is sometimes inconsiderate and unkind. This makes some pupils feel unsafe at times. Bullying does occasionally happen.

Leaders show a determination to prevent such behaviour, and act to address it when it happens. They have many strategies in place to help pupils make the right choices. However, some pupils do not think that leaders and teachers deal with incidents of poor behaviour effectively.

Leaders encourage pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. Teachers run clubs at lunchtimes for pupils. These include colouring, murder mystery book club, debating and many sports.

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

Leaders have recently restructured staff roles and responsibilities. This has provided more capacity for the management and support of pupils' behaviour and well-being. Improvement is being made in these areas. Indeed, teachers say pupils' behaviour in lessons has

improved significantly. Leaders consult with staff on issues such as workload. Staff say they belong to a supportive community.

Leaders have designed an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. It is well sequenced so that pupils build up greater knowledge over time. At GCSE, most pupils study the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects. All pupils study religious education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities complete the same work as other pupils. Leaders identify these pupils' needs and provide them with the help they need.

Teachers use their subject knowledge well to explain new information to pupils. They make sure that pupils secure essential knowledge, and check pupils' understanding. Pupils complete starter activities to revisit learning from recent lessons. This helps pupils to build up their knowledge of new topics.

In the sixth form, teachers use questioning and discussion to deepen pupils' learning. For example, A-level English students develop sophisticated interpretations of 'Hamlet'. They produce reasoned arguments on how the character changed during the play. Chemistry students show a secure knowledge and understanding of chemical reactions. They explain how and why reactions take place in processes like redox titration.

Leaders have developed a programme to help pupils at an early stage of reading. A member of staff, trained in phonics, teaches these pupils and checks on their progress. Pupils catch up, developing their confidence and fluency in reading. Leaders give reading a high priority; they have trained all teachers in literacy. This enables teachers to lead weekly reading sessions with their form groups.

Leaders do not tolerate low-level disruption in lessons. They have introduced a clear set of expectations, and pupils are responding well to these. Pupils say there is some inconsistency in how teachers manage behaviour. They feel a few teachers are not always fair. However, pupils behave well in lessons most of the time.

Pupils' behaviour around the school can be boisterous and loud, especially at break and lunchtime. Sometimes there are physical altercations between pupils, but leaders stop these from escalating. Many pupils feel that serious behaviour incidents are not always dealt with well. Some pupils say they do not always feel safe at school. Some do not tell a member of staff when they experience negative behaviour towards them. Leaders are working to establish a more positive culture in the school.

Pupils learn about a broad range of issues that help their personal development. These include relationships, physical and mental health and citizenship. Pupils enjoy this aspect of their education. They say they can discuss sensitive issues openly. Pupils receive careers information and guidance. They meet employers, take part in work experience and receive individual careers interviews. Sixth-form students receive guidance on university applications. This helps pupils to make well-informed choices about the next stage of their education or training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of safeguarding across the school community. They train staff and provide them with regular updates on local safeguarding risks. Staff are alert to signs of concern in pupils. They fulfil their responsibilities with regard to reporting and recording concerns. The safeguarding team meets regularly to discuss individual pupils. Leaders are very knowledgeable and engage with parents and carers well. They work effectively with external agencies to secure the help pupils need. Leaders are persistent in securing the support pupils require. Pupils are safe at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' behaviour towards each other outside of lessons can be unkind and inconsiderate. This makes some pupils feel unsafe. In addition, some pupils do not tell staff when such behaviour occurs as they think that telling an adult at the school will make things worse for them. Leaders should build a culture where:
 - unkind behaviour is not tolerated by any member of the school community
 - unkind behaviour is dealt with consistently and effectively by leaders so that it does not happen again
 - pupils feel safe and are willing to talk to an adult in the school because they are confident that leaders' actions will stop the behaviour concerned.

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 January 2012.

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	100282
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10204485
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	670
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ann-Marie Charles
Headteacher	Jane Heffernan (Executive Headteacher) Andy English (Headteacher Designate)
Website	www.ourladays.hackney.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Our Lady's Catholic High School works in partnership with Cardinal Pole Catholic School. The schools have the same executive headteacher.
- The school is of the Roman Catholic denomination. It is in the Archdiocese of Westminster. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in May 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended during the pandemic and restarted in September 2021. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of its previous section 48 inspection.
- The school uses one alternative provider, The Boxing Academy.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher designate, members of the leadership team, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, English, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject 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 spoke with additional groups of pupils and individual pupils about behaviour.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 191 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 43 responses to the staff survey and eight responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bob Hamlyn

Her Majesty's Inspector

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