

Inspection of a good school: Norbury High School for Girls

Kensington Avenue, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8BT

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 March 2022

Outcome

Norbury High School for Girls continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Norbury High School for Girls is a diverse community where pupils are valued as individuals. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They are motivated by leaders' high expectations of them. Leaders promote the value of knowledge and work with teachers to improve pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to become creative, enterprising citizens. They greatly value opportunities to take part in the 'NM Jets' cheerleading programme and the acclaimed choirs. Pupils are articulate, and their confidence shines through. They achieve well and take pride in their work. They behave respectfully and are keen to learn.

Before the national lockdowns, leaders were proactive in developing remote learning. This has been used extensively to support learning and personal development during the period of COVID-19. Pupils found this very helpful. They said how hard teachers worked to keep their learning up to date. They appreciate the chances they now have to make up for learning they missed, particularly science practicals. Virtual learning is still being used in a variety of ways to support the curriculum.

Bullying is extremely rare. If it happens, pupils know who to tell so that it can be dealt with quickly.

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

In many respects, leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. Their plans in some subjects include a broad sweep of human culture. In history, for example, pupils learn about British and European history and features of past non-European societies. They discover how world history is interconnected. In English, they learn to appreciate classic English literature from Shakespeare to poetry from around the world. In science, to make sure all pupils can cover key content in chemistry, biology and physics, they are using days dedicated to practical work and special revision sessions. In Spanish, a new focus on speaking has improved learning.

From Year 7 through to the sixth form, pupils are achieving well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. They are proud of their work and progress. Sixth-form pupils enjoy the subjects they have chosen and participate confidently in lessons. Teachers help pupils remember their learning. Pupils can explain how they use teachers' feedback to improve their work.

An emphasis is placed on reading in many lessons. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud in class. Interesting books are promoted imaginatively in the school library. However, not all pupils say they read for pleasure.

The school does a great deal to encourage pupils' participation in music, art, drama and sport. The content of the arts curriculum has a strong focus on popular cultures. For example, pupils in Year 11 follow a qualification with a focus on contemporary music performance rather than the broader music GCSE curriculum course. This, in turn, influences the content of the key stage 3 curriculum. Likewise, in art, it is not clear how far pupils explore the work of great artists globally and over time. Reviewing the content of the arts courses in the curriculum is an area for the school's further development.

At key stages 5, the school has provided courses which appeal to students, such as forensic science. Leaders have recognised that to enhance pupils' future opportunities it is important to increase take-up of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects at key stage 4 so that a greater number also have the option of accessing more traditional and academic courses. This work has started, and improvements in Ebacc take-up are already being seen.

The school's mission is 'dedicated to preparing students for the future'. Provision for their wider development is strong. The pastoral programme and student opportunities help pupils develop resilience and self-confidence. They learn about democracy, the rule of law and respect. They are developing a sense of agency and believe school leaders listen to them. They gain an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. There are many extra-curricular opportunities, including a wide range of clubs, school shows, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and trips to the theatre and universities.

Teachers say their workload is manageable and they feel well supported. Governors and trustees engage with staff. They take account of the main pressures on them and their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are sharply aware of the local context and the challenges it poses for pupils' safety. Staff have meaningfully participated in relevant training. They are proactive in identifying the dangers and the pupils at risk. They work well with local agencies, including the police, to manage these risks and protect pupils. They ensure that pupils are taught how to keep safe on all levels. This was confirmed in conversations with pupils, who felt safe and could talk about how they are taught to be safe. Governors and trustees understand and fulfil their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding and equalities.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school encourages participation in arts activities. Some groups, such as the choirs, are popular and successful. However, at key stage 3, there is an imbalance in the musical and visual arts styles studied by pupils. This limits their readiness to take these subjects to the next level, including at GCSE or A level. Leaders should review the content of arts curriculum subjects, including at key stage 3, to ensure that pupils learn in-depth about a greater range of styles and historical periods.
- The school is committed to increasing the take-up of EBacc subjects. Leaders and teachers have recognised the need for improved learning in these subjects, including strengthening pupils' preparedness for the sixth form. This work should continue so that more pupils are able to access a greater range of courses in the sixth form.

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 June 2013.

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	137754
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10212497
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,260
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	146
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of trust	Alan Chambers
Headteacher	Markieu Hayden
Website	www.nhsg.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017

Information about this school

- This school is a secondary academy for girls, part of The Manor Trust
- During the inspection, six pupils were placed in five different alternative provisions

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 headteacher, deputy and assistant heads; staff responsible for careers, personal development, safeguarding, enrichment and mental health; the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo); the human resources officer; heads of science, history, humanities, English, Spanish and art; the chief executive officer of the

trust; the school's local authority school improvement partner; the local authority director of education; school governors; and subject teachers.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, English, history, science and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited sixth-form lessons in psychology, sociology and business studies, a Year 11 drama lesson and spoke to pupils in the art and music areas, where the inspectors explored resources. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in music.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors examined relevant documentation, including the single central record, case studies and records of referrals. They also spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and her deputy, the SENCo and groups of teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to various groups of pupils around the school.

Inspection team

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