

Inspection of The Charter School North Dulwich

Red Post Hill, London SE24 9JH

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since November 2009.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are determined that all pupils will succeed. They maintain high academic standards through an ambitious curriculum. Leaders have worked to diversify the curriculum to make it more relevant to pupils in the school. In art, for example, pupils study artists from a range of cultural backgrounds. Pupils work hard. They know their teachers want the best for them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) flourish here.

Pupils are happy and safe. They are polite and respectful to each other. Leaders have the highest expectations for the way pupils behave. Bullying is rare and staff deal with instances of bullying swiftly. Pupils are taught to treat everyone equally. As a result, there is a strong sense of harmony among the school community.

Pupils are ambitious for the future. Leaders promote a wide range of activities that will foster self-belief and ambition and develop pupils' character. Pupils take seriously the school's core values of excellence, perseverance, responsibility, and family. Sixth-form students are role models for younger pupils in the school. They lead school initiatives to promote diversity and have developed their own anti-racism manifesto.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious academic curriculum. All pupils receive a high-quality education. Students in the sixth form achieve very highly. Most pupils stay at the school after Year 11 to attend the sixth form.

Subject leaders have clearly identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. This is well-sequenced so that pupils build up their knowledge securely over time. Teachers routinely assess pupils' understanding. They draw on what pupils have learned in previous lessons. They swiftly identify and address any gaps in pupils' understanding. This makes sure that pupils are clear what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils have a strong foundation of component knowledge on which they can build.

Leaders know that reading fluently is important for all pupils to succeed. Pupils read often and widely. Sixth-form students enjoy listening to younger pupils read. In English, pupils study texts that are varied and challenging. Teachers help pupils to understand the social and historical context of the books they read.

Leaders ensure that all pupils access the full curriculum. Staff are skilled at adapting lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, especially those with SEND. Weaker readers receive support to improve their fluency and comprehension. This allows them to access and benefit from the ambitious curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are keen to learn and take great pride in their work. Teachers frequently engage pupils in debate around current affairs. Pupils express their views with maturity and are highly respectful of the views of others.

Pupils lead change within the school. They organise events both in school and the local community around the issues that matter most to them. The school council has led initiatives to raise awareness of issues around sexual harassment and racism. Students in the sixth form develop leaderships skills. They complete voluntary activities with local primary schools and charities.

Leaders carefully plan the experiences of pupils to develop their confidence and determination. For example, all pupils in Year 9 and Year 10 take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils receive a well-established curriculum of careers information, education, advice, and guidance. They learn about the many career pathways open to them and are helped to make the choices that are right for them. Sixth-form students are extremely well prepared for higher education and employment.

Leaders strive for excellence in all aspects of the school's work. Members of the governing body share leaders' ambition for the school and support leaders to realise it. Leaders work with local schools to share their knowledge and expertise.

Staff work collaboratively to contribute to whole-school decision-making. They appreciate the opportunities they are given to develop their subject expertise. This helps to make them experts in their subjects and to get the best from their pupils. Leaders take effective steps to help staff to manage their workload. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the policies and procedures for safeguarding are robust. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They are alert to the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help they need. The procedures for the safe recruitment of new staff members are secure.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increased focus on mental health and online safety. Pupils have learned about sexual harassment and consent. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy and safe relationships. They trust the adults in the school to support them when they need it.

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	136298
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10229085
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,279
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	388
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Maugham
Headteacher	Christian Hicks (executive headteacher), Mark Pain (head of school)
Website	www.charternorthdulwich.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Charter School North Dulwich converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, The Charter School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, and the head of school, as well as members of the wider school leadership team. They also met with members of the trust board, including the chair of trustees, and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, art, music and history. They met with curriculum leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the written records of meetings of the governing body, school policies and improvement plans. They looked at records related to attendance, behaviour, and pupil movement.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders responsible for safeguarding and checked the single central record. They also reviewed safeguarding documentation and spoke to pupils and staff about the safety of pupils in school.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses that were submitted by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views.

Inspection team

Annabel Davies, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bec Allott	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
David Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Healey-Welch	Her Majesty's Inspector

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