

Inspection of The Camden School for Girls

Sandall Road, London NW5 2DB

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

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 14 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?

Camden School for Girls is a calm, caring place where pupils aim high. Staff help pupils to develop considerate attitudes and an awareness of the wider world. Leaders are ambitious for all their pupils. They encourage pupils to live up to the school's motto, 'onwards and upwards'. Pupils are safe and well cared for by staff.

Pupils are attentive and keen to learn. Bullying is rare. Staff deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils behave with consistently high levels of respect. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are committed to their learning and achieve highly. They persevere when work is difficult. Attendance of all pupils is excellent.

Pupils said that they feel valued and show that they value others. They enjoy school and appreciate the diversity of their school community and its heritage. Pupils are proud of their involvement in school life. For example, sixth-form students like supporting younger pupils with their learning and development.

Leaders provide a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to choose from. This includes the clubs for current affairs, GCSE Greek, various sports clubs, and the 'eco-committee'.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is accessible to all pupils. Pupils study a wide range of subjects, including classics, in Years 7 to 9. Subjects such as languages and history are popular at GCSE. In the sixth form, students have an ambitious study programme that prepares them well for their next steps.

In many subjects, leaders have carefully considered what they are teaching and why. In English, for example, leaders have selected texts for pupils to read to highlight the origin of the English language. This is linked to pupils' learning about the history of migration. In a few subjects, particularly in Years 7 to 9, leaders' curriculum planning is not so well thought out. Some lessons are not well sequenced to build up pupils' knowledge over time. In a few subjects, leaders do not ensure that pupils are taught the full range of subject content as set out in the national curriculum. This means that pupils do not develop the skills and knowledge they need in these subjects. In computing, leaders have limited the time given on the school timetable to this subject. As a result, staff have not had the opportunity to deepen pupils' understanding.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Leaders provide effective support and subject-specific training for all staff. They provide opportunities for all staff to teach at A level to develop subject expertise. Teachers choose lesson resources and tasks carefully. They guide pupils well in lessons to draw on what they have learned before.

In most subjects, staff regularly check pupils' understanding and pick up on pupils' misconceptions. However, in a few subject areas, staff do not carefully check what pupils have learned. This limits their insight into what pupils know and remember. As a result, teaching does not routinely address gaps in knowledge or the next steps in pupils' learning.

Staff are well informed about pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide effective support so that pupils with SEND access the same learning and achieve well. The library is at the heart of the school and is well used by pupils. Teachers share their love of reading with pupils. Staff support pupils who are at an early stage of reading to become fluent readers.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They are attentive and listen thoughtfully to one another's views. In some lessons, many pupils are proud to demonstrate their knowledge to the rest of the class. There is mutual respect between pupils and staff.

Pupils are taught about healthy and unhealthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. Pupils enjoy theology lessons where they explore different world religions and challenge their own beliefs. Leaders have a structured careers programme in place. They ensure that it meets all aspects of the Baker Clause. Pupils value the opportunity to do work experience in Years 10 and 12.

Pupils said that they feel listened to at school. For example, the school council gathers pupils' views and take forward pupils' suggestions. Pupils take on various responsibilities through their leadership roles. This includes school health champions who lead on whole-school well-being. Recently, pupils led a successful campaign on promoting mental health.

Leaders and governors listen to staff's views when they consider making changes to the school. They support staff in managing workload as well as their well-being. Staff said that they appreciate this. Governors implement their equalities duty rigorously and hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They perform all necessary pre-recruitment checks on staff. Leaders ensure that all staff are vigilant and apply their safeguarding training. Staff are well informed about the risks pupils might face and report any concerns. Leaders are quick to follow these up and put appropriate support in place.

Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries. They are confident that staff will support them. They learn to keep safe, including online and in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, particularly in Years 7 to 9, leaders have not given careful thought to the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember. In computing, teachers do not have sufficient time to teach subject content in depth. This affects pupils' learning and preparation for future study. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is designed coherently. They should ensure that staff have sufficient time to teach all subjects in sufficient depth.
- Assessment is not used consistently well across the school. Leaders do not ensure that staff in all subjects routinely and carefully check pupils' understanding. This means that teachers do not always have an accurate picture of what pupils know and remember, and pupils' misunderstandings can be missed. Leaders must ensure that staff use assessment effectively across the school.

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	100054
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10211781
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	1,067
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	472
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Pope
Headteacher	Kateryna Law
Website	www.camdengirls.camden.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2007

Information about this school

- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2021.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provision, Westminster Kingsway College.

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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the chair and vice chair of the governing body and other governors.

- Through discussion with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding including pre-employment checks for staff and records of work with external agencies.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, classics, history, art and geography. 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 considered other subjects as well.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtime. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their views of behaviour, their workload and well-being. Inspectors also spoke with pupils, including student leaders, to consider their views. Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents, staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Anne Hudson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Blaney	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Healey-Welch	Her Majesty's Inspector

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