

Inspection of Saracens High School

Corner Mead, London NW9 4AS

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school benefit from a nurturing and supportive environment. The Saracens' values of discipline, hard work, honesty and humility are promoted across the school community. Diversity is celebrated and creativity is encouraged. In the annual 'Together We Create' weeks, all pupils participate in an ambitious programme of activities to enhance their learning across a range of creative subjects.

In lessons, pupils work hard and show respect to their teachers. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and know their pupils well. Generally, pupils behave well, and they say that staff deal with any bullying if it does occur. Pupils feel safe in this school and know what to do if they have any concerns. They do not think any areas of the school are unsafe.

Leaders are determined to provide the best possible experiences for pupils. Well-established initiatives such as family lunch and family reading help pupils to enjoy a genuine sense of community in the school. Pupils also experience a wide range of opportunities beyond the school and the local area. This includes theatre visits to the West End, kayaking at outdoor activity centres, and attending high-profile sporting fixtures.

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

Leaders are ambitious for the pupils here and have put in place a curriculum that supports their desire for all to succeed. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have access to the same curriculum and wider opportunities as their peers. In lessons, pupils benefit from the strong subject knowledge of their teachers, who use a range of techniques to extend pupils' knowledge. Teachers break down instructions in a clear way so that pupils understand the next steps in their learning. Some aspects of the curriculum and the way in which teachers check pupils' progress are developing. For example, in some subjects, pupils are able to refine their work through the use of improvement activities, but such systems are not consistently applied across all subjects.

Pupils who need extra help, for example those with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language, are very well supported in lessons. Teachers know the needs of these pupils well and use a range of strategies to help them access their learning, including support from very well-trained teaching assistants.

Leaders are ambitious in their drive to promote reading across the school. Pupils benefit from regular family reading sessions. Targeted support for pupils who need extra help with reading is delivered by trained staff.

Carefully considered personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are taught by specialist teachers to all year groups. Pupils value these lessons where they find out about relationships, how to stay safe and healthy, and life skills such as how to

give cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Careers information, advice and guidance are integral parts of the PSHE programme, and a variety of employers come into school to deliver workshop sessions to pupils from all year groups. Pupils benefit from a very wide range of activities that enrich and enhance the curriculum. Leaders make sure that all pupils are able to benefit from visits to places of cultural significance in London and beyond during 'making memories week'.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. These expectations are well known by staff and pupils, but are not always consistently applied. Pupils mostly behave well in lessons and around the school, but there are occasions when low-level disruption is evident. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare, and that incidents are dealt with quickly when they do occur. Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders are proactive in encouraging good attendance, including regular home visits where necessary.

Governors know the school well and work closely with leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. They challenge leaders appropriately, for example by seeking additional reassurance and clarification over curriculum design. Leaders take action to promote and protect staff well-being. Staff feel valued in their work, and benefit from extensive training opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding and vigilance across the school. All members of staff, including support staff, are clear about how safeguarding is managed and who to seek advice from. Clear reporting and recording systems mean that any issues are identified quickly. Leaders work closely with local agencies to make sure that support is put in place in a timely manner.

Pupils say that they feel safe in the school, and they know who they can talk to if they have a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the strategies for checking pupils' progress through the curriculum are less well developed than in others. This means that misconceptions can go unchecked or incomplete work can go unchallenged by teachers. Leaders should build on their existing work to make sure that the school's feedback and assessment strategy is fully embedded across the school. This is so that pupils know how to improve their work and teachers routinely check that pupils are retaining what they have been taught in their long-term memory.

- Occasionally, pupils' behaviour does not meet leaders' high expectations, both in classrooms and around the school. Leaders should ensure that the school's behaviour policies are applied consistently so that learning is not disrupted and movement around the school is calm.

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	145921
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10241560
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	659
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Chase
Principal	Matthew Stevens
Website	www.saracenshigh.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2018 and now has pupils in Year 7 to Year 10. The school plans to admit pupils to its sixth form in September 2023.
- On occasions, the school makes use of one alternative education provider, Pavilion Study Centre, for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 and above with information about approved 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 that 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 carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils. Inspectors also met with subject leaders for geography and design and technology, and looked at pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal and with members of staff, as well as a range of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health and safety, as well as their welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for SEND, careers education, behaviour, reading and pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and met with members of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Heidi Swidenbank	Ofsted Inspector
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