

Inspection of The Henrietta Barnett School

Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 7BN

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Ofsted has not previously inspected The Henrietta Barnett School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, 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 of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very keen to acquire knowledge in a broad range of subjects, which include Latin, ancient Greek and classical civilisation. Their behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils maintain their focus in lessons for long periods of time and enjoy thinking about the questions teachers pose. They give detailed explanations of what they have learned. This is evident in all year groups, but especially in the sixth form. Pupils' confidence is largely the result of the school's focus on building character by teaching pupils how to listen, debate and reason.

Pupils read a lot of books to extend their general knowledge. Tellingly, one pupil remarked, 'When you go to the library to choose a book, you always end up taking two!'

Pupils and staff agree that bullying in the school is extremely rare, and this is supported by the school's records. Pupils understand the consequences of bullying in its different forms. Pupils are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with sensitively and effectively.

Leaders are rightly focused on improving the quality of the curriculum and assessment in every subject. Some subjects are further ahead than others on this journey.

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

The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders and governors share a strong vision to provide high-quality academic education. This vision is being realised. Staff are committed to the school's mission. They form a united and hard-working team. They appreciate the leadership and support that senior leaders provide. Morale is strong.

In most subjects, the curriculum is planned effectively to ensure that pupils build their learning in a structured and logical way. This is especially so in English, history, classics and art, where the attention to detail means that pupils learn well. In history, for example, the concept of authority is taught as a key theme across different year groups. Pupils develop their understanding of the concept in the context of Norman Britain and Nazi Germany, for instance. This is also the case in the sixth form. The wide range of academic subjects offered means that nearly all students find a pathway that is right for them. Many move on to higher education at top universities.

In other subjects across the school, pupils learn well because leaders identify the essential knowledge needed to achieve at a high level. For example, in art, pupils learn how to use colour in increasingly sophisticated ways. In mathematics and science, the order in which the fundamental concepts are taught enables pupils to

make connections. This means that they know more and remember more as they move up the school. By the time they reach the sixth form, most students are skilful at making meaningful connections between related ideas that thread through the curriculum.

Teachers explain new concepts clearly, and most use assessment well. They know whether pupils have understood important concepts. They revisit learning when pupils have not mastered key knowledge. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Occasionally, teachers do not check gaps in pupils' understanding sharply enough. As a result, it is not clear when some pupils are ready to move on to the next stage of learning. This includes some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who require accurate assessment of their knowledge and skills.

Throughout the school, pupils behave exceptionally well. This is because leaders have created an environment where pupils' desire to learn trumps everything else. Pupils' confidence is enhanced through strong participation in the school's wide ranging extra-curricular provision. This includes debating clubs and a symphony orchestra, as well as sports, drama and engineering provision.

Leaders provide a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Pupils learn to value the importance of democracy. They learn to respect others, especially those who are different from themselves. The school is an inclusive community where difference is valued. This is demonstrated strongly in the sixth form for instance, through the student-led creation of a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) forum. The focus is to ensure that these students are an integral part of the school community.

Leaders ensure that pupils have appropriate impartial careers advice and guidance. Further impetus has been given to this aspect of the school's work this year. Students in the sixth form benefit from a range of rich experiences. These build their character, support them in their next steps and prepare them well for adult life.

The governing body has considerable expertise. The governors provide strong support for leaders. For example, in getting the school back on an even keel after a brief period of financial difficulty. Governors also provide effective challenge, although this does not extend to a sharp evaluation of curriculum quality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there are rigorous procedures to promote pupils' welfare, safety and well-being. Up-to-date policies mean that the most recent government guidance informs practice. Teachers have a secure understanding of the safeguarding procedures and how to report concerns. Training for staff is comprehensive.

Leaders and governors ensure that staff vetting checks are carried out effectively. The strong links with outside agencies mean that help for pupils is provided quickly. Leaders employ a wide range of support staff to enhance further the support they provide for pupils. The PSHCE programme and assemblies ensure that pupils are taught about staying safe. This includes online safety, cyberbullying and peer-on-peer abuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In all subjects, teachers check pupils' knowledge and skills. However, the quality and impact of assessment practice varies across subjects. Leaders should ensure that the best practice, which exists in pockets across the school, is shared in a systematic way to further deepen pupils' subject-specific understanding.

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	138051
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10228504
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	793
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Cosmetatos
Headteacher	Clare Wagner
Website	http://www.hbschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Henrietta Barnett School converted to become an academy school in September 2012. When its predecessor school, also The Henrietta Barnett School, was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets all 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors held an online meeting with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a telephone conversation with the executive director of Barnet local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, art, music and classics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead, scrutinising policies and records relating to child protection and examining the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school.
- Inspectors considered responses from staff and pupils to the online inspection questionnaires.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including written responses.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Aruna Sharma	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Cavanagh	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Crawte	Ofsted Inspector
Joseph Sparks	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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