

Inspection of Swakeleys School for Girls

Clifton Gardens, Hillingdon, Uxbridge UB10 0EJ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Outstanding
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This school was last inspected eight 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?

Pupils at this school work hard and achieve well. They gain qualifications in a wide range of subjects, and this helps them to be well prepared for their next stage in education and/or employment. Pupils benefit from having teachers who have very strong subject knowledge and who design learning activities carefully.

Pupils behave well in lessons and say that disruption to learning is very rare. Pupils feel safe in this school. They know who to talk to if they have a concern, and they are taught how to make healthy and safe choices. Pupils take advantage of a wide range of activities that enrich and extend the curriculum, for example the popular Lit Fest celebrating reading and literature. There are numerous clubs and after-school activities. Pupils are also given the opportunity to take on leadership roles in the school, such as being a prefect or member of the school council. However, a few pupils say that they feel their concerns are not listened to.

Diversity is celebrated, but leaders are not complacent and are taking steps to further develop the curriculum so that it reflects the whole school community.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that results in strong academic outcomes for pupils. They make sure that pupils study a broad range of subjects to the depth expected by the national curriculum. Leaders have prioritised the subjects making up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualification and the proportion of pupils studying these subjects at GCSE is rising. Sixth-form students benefit from a wide range of courses. Most sixth-form students go on to study at university.

Leaders think carefully about the content of each subject, making sure there is a logical sequence to learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which is especially evident in the sixth form. They check how well pupils are learning key ideas and give timely feedback to pupils about how they are getting on with their work. Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils remember knowledge, including regular quizzes and carefully considered starter activities. Sometimes, teachers do not make sure that pupils understand how well they are doing. On occasions, teachers do not ensure that pupils attempt the more challenging work available.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as other pupils across the school. Teachers know their pupils well and make appropriate adaptations in class to enable this to happen. All staff are trained to support the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders make sure that any interventions or additional support provided are effective.

Reading is prioritised for all year groups. A popular library, whole-school reading events, a sixth-form literary society and carefully chosen texts in English all help to promote a love of reading. Leaders identify those pupils who need support with

accuracy and fluency in their reading and make sure these pupils are helped to catch up.

Leaders have established a clear policy setting out high expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils' learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders take action to address any unacceptable behaviour, including the misuse of social media, which has increased since the disruption to school life caused by COVID-19. Most pupils say that bullying is dealt with, although a few still feel that it is an issue in the school that needs further attention.

Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders work closely with families who need help to overcome barriers to pupils' attendance.

Leaders ensure that pupils' development is extended beyond the academic subjects. They provide an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and leadership opportunities. The recently planned cultural day and the school's revised physical education kit were both initiated by pupils through the school council. A well-planned personal development programme helps pupils to stay safe and to make healthy choices.

An extensive careers programme offered across the school helps pupils, including those in the sixth form, to make informed decisions about their futures. Leaders take steps to promote and celebrate diversity through both the curriculum and enrichment activities. However, there are small pockets of disquiet in the school regarding approaches to equality of opportunity and perceived unfairness.

School leaders are supported by a committed governing body whose members fulfil their statutory duties and who know the school very well. Staff are very well supported by leaders to do their job. They value the extensive training opportunities on offer and the prioritising of their well-being. Staff say they are proud to work in the school.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils' safeguarding needs, including a thorough knowledge of local contextual issues. Effective communication and information-sharing within the school and beyond ensure that leaders check that the most vulnerable pupils remain safe. Leaders work closely with local agencies for advice and support.

Pupils can identify trusted adults they can talk to and places they can go to in school if they have any concerns. Regular training and timely updates ensure that staff are alert to safeguarding concerns and know how to report these.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not ensure that pupils know how well they are doing or that they tackle more challenging tasks. This means that sometimes pupils do not build their knowledge and understanding as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that there is further clarity and consistency in applying assessment strategies.
- Sometimes, leaders do not engage well enough with pupils to understand their opinions. This results in some pupils lacking confidence in leaders to deal well with bullying and a perception that some pupils are treated unfairly. Leaders should engage further with pupils in the school so that they feel listened to, and that their concerns are resolved.

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	136631
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10212535
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1304
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dean Charles
Headteacher	Sue Pryor
Website	http://swakeleys.hillingdon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school occasionally makes use of one alternative education provider, Springboard West, for a small number of pupils.
- The school has a small number of boys in the sixth form.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause for careers education, information, advice and guidance.

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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, modern foreign languages and geography. 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 history, art and music, and looked at pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and with members of staff, as well as a range of pupils. They considered 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.
- A team inspector visited the alternative education provider that the school is currently using.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Amanda Carter-Fraser	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lauren Thorpe	Ofsted Inspector
Eliot Wong	Ofsted Inspector
Verity Lane	Ofsted Inspector

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