

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Sacred Heart High School

212 Hammersmith Road, Hammersmith, London W6 7DG

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 2023

## **Outcome**

Sacred Heart High School continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Sharon O'Donovan. The school is a single academy, under the trusteeship of the Society of the Sacred Heart, which means other people also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sister Catherine Lloyd.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The pupils and students at Sacred Heart High School quickly learn to be thoughtful, curious and confident learners.

There is a harmonious atmosphere at the school. Pupils move around the building safely and politely. In lessons, pupils support one another by actively listening and asking questions. This means pupils can express themselves, take risks and develop their ideas with confidence. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that, should any incidences occur, their teachers will empower them and help to resolve them. This helps to ensure that pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school.

Pupils learn to act as responsible citizens. For example, they raise money for charity and are encouraged to discuss and debate complex issues, showing respect for differing viewpoints. Pupils are aspirational and ambitious. For example, displayed around the school are posters of previous pupils and other women who have achieved great things.

The Sacred Heart Goals outline the very high expectations the school has of its community. Pupils and students in the sixth form appreciate the help and support their teachers offer. They know their teachers go above and beyond to help them and, in response, they too surpass expectations.

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

Leaders and staff are highly ambitious. This is reflected in the sophisticated well-structured curriculum in all subjects. Leaders have carefully identified the key building blocks of knowledge pupils need to access more complex ideas as they get older. For

instance, in science, pupils learn about types of energy. They draw on this knowledge as they begin to work on electric circuit formulas. Students in the sixth form build on this when solving more complex electrical problems at A level. Similarly, in English, pupils' initial study of a range of dystopian texts prepares them well to analyse the themes presented in Orwell's '1984'.

Teachers receive high-quality professional development that supports them to implement the curriculum well. They explain subject content with precision. Resources, activities and discussions are well chosen to help pupils progress through the curriculum by making connections, embedding key knowledge and applying different skills. Teachers regularly check what pupils have learned and correct misconceptions as they occur. As a result, pupils, and students in the sixth form, develop a deep body of knowledge across the curriculum.

School leaders are swift to identify and understand any barriers to learning pupils may have. They work closely with pupils and their families. If necessary, other professionals and experts are engaged to ensure that pupils get the right help. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access an ambitious curriculum and produce work of very high quality.

Reading is valued across the school. For example, during tutor time pupils engage in group reading led by the student reading ambassadors. Books are carefully selected to ensure that pupils are exposed to a diverse and varied range of literature. Pupils who need additional help to read fluently access additional support led by sixth-form students. This helps to develop their confidence and accuracy.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are highly engaged in their learning. They are extremely responsive to their teachers' instructions and guidance. They are respectful to adults and to each other in classrooms and around the school. Lessons proceed without disruption, allowing pupils to learn and flourish.

The strong spiritual ethos forms the bedrock of school life. The approach to pupils' broader personal development is exceptional and rooted in this faith. A well-constructed curriculum helps pupils to understand important ideas, such as staying physically and emotionally safe and the importance of respectful relationships. There is a rich menu of extra-curricular activities and events. Pupils participate in an array of sports, including rowing, netball, basketball and football. The arts are a key feature of this offer. For example, the arts festival involved guest speakers, visits and opportunities for all pupils to create and perform. Art, music and drama clubs are well attended.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, receive detailed advice and guidance when considering their next steps. Courses and programmes that will help pupils fulfil their ambitions are well promoted, whether at the school's own sixth form or elsewhere.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are highly invested in serving their community. They actively seek advice and guidance from a range of experts to ensure the best possible experiences for their pupils. For example, a review of systems has supported attendance to improve. Parents and carers are very happy; they feel communication is

strong and value the school's work. Staff enjoy working here. They feel well supported to develop professionally and that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in September 2017.

## **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.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137935
<b>Local authority</b>	Hammersmith & Fulham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290196
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,138
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	152
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sister Catherine Lloyd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon O'Donovan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sacredhearthish.org.uk">www.sacredhearthish.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	26 and 27 September 2017

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school is of Roman Catholic denomination. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2020.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science and art. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.

- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body. They also spoke with representatives of the diocese and the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's online surveys.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

### **Inspection team**

Una Buckley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Luke Stubbles

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Bruce

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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