

# Inspection of La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School

Atkins Road, London SW12 0AB

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since April 2013.

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

This school aims for every pupil to reach their full potential. It does so, not only by having high expectations for pupils, but by supporting their individual aspirations and talents. The school guides pupils to achieve excellent outcomes in public examinations and provides high-quality support for their wider well-being. Pupils feel happy and safe. They know there is an adult they can talk to if needed.

The school provides a range of clubs and trips to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils may take on a range of responsibilities and opportunities to develop their leadership skills. This continues into the sixth form, where students take part in a strong enrichment programme. Students take great pride in supporting the local community and their younger peers.

Pupils behave extremely well, both in and out of lessons. The school promotes kindness and respect, which is evident in the interactions between pupils. Parents and carers speak favourably of the school and appreciate the school's efforts to 'see the whole child'. They speak of the school's warmth, which ensures that their children become 'confident young women'.

The school provides an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the sixth form, the introduction of T levels has been a great success. These qualifications have raised aspirations and further enriched the careers programme.

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

The school has established and consistently delivers a high-quality curriculum. Leaders continue to refine it to ensure it is broad and ambitious. The 'creative arts' are taught on rotation in Years 7 to 9, and the school offers a range of subjects at Years 10 and 11, including economics, sociology, health and social care, and sports. These choices support the sixth-form offer of both A levels and T levels, which includes health and midwifery, education and childcare, construction, legal services, and digital. Provision in the sixth form is particularly strong. Students are encouraged to draw on pre-reading to develop discussions in class and consider a range of ideas.

Teachers are experts in their subjects, and they build pupils' confidence through skilled questioning. For example, in sociology, pupils discuss the coverage of crime by the media and consider that the subject helps to broaden their understanding of the world. Teachers check regularly that pupils understand what they have been taught before moving on to new content. As a result, pupils' knowledge builds methodically.

Leaders think carefully about the order in which topics are taught. For example, in Spanish and French, teachers build secure knowledge of the present, past and

future tenses. Careful thought is also given to diversity within the curriculum. For example, leaders have introduced the text 'Raisin in the Sun' in English. In history, pupils explore the civil rights movement in Britain.

The needs of pupils with SEND are identified accurately. These are met both in class and in the wider curriculum through a range of after-school clubs and activities. These pupils receive excellent support, and the school uses the services of specialist professionals where necessary. Pupils with SEND achieve well, and many continue into the sixth form, where they have the same high aspirations as their peers.

The school identifies pupils who need support with their reading and provides them with regular, effective support that quickly builds up pupils' reading fluency. Sixth-form students support pupils' confidence with guided reading sessions.

The learning environment is highly positive, with no disruptions. Pupils are proud of their work and respectful to their peers and teachers. Their attendance is given high priority. Pupils attend very well, including in the sixth form. Leaders follow up on any absence quickly and effectively.

The school provides an extensive careers programme, which draws on a wide range of industry, businesses and healthcare providers. The T levels on offer are firmly established in the sixth form, and students participate in work placements to apply their knowledge to real-life situations. For example, students may use industry-standard coding software. They also have use of specialist midwifery rooms and work with local hospitals. These links and partnerships enrich the careers programme throughout the school. This means that pupils benefit from considered guidance and advice, as well as talks and workshops.

The school delivers a strong personal development programme. Pupils explore British values, equality of opportunity, online safety, and relationships meaningfully. They demonstrate respectful attitudes and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Enrichment opportunities such as visits to the theatre and museums deepen their subject knowledge. Pupils participate well in clubs, including the cadets working with the Royal Navy. Pupils not only develop a range of skills but also can undertake rock climbing, first aid or mountain biking. The school supports pupils who wish to learn a musical instrument, and there is an active theatre company for those with interests in the arts.

Staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained and fully prepared to take up further professional roles. Those at the start of their careers are particularly well nurtured and feel confident in their chosen career. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. They know what the school does well and where it could develop further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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>	100637
<b>Local authority</b>	Lambeth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296568
<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,202
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	370
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sue Woodman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dominic Malins
<b>Website</b>	laretraite.co.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 April 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The headteacher of this school took up their post in September 2015.
- 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.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers to support a small number of pupils.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character and is in the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was carried out in June 2018.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, personal, social and health education, behaviour and attendance, early reading, pupils' wider development and sixth form.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the board of governors, the diocese, and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, modern foreign languages, sociology, mathematics and computing.
- 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 also discussed the curriculum and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' school evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' personal development, records of behaviour and attendance, and reports to those responsible for oversight.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to understand their experience of the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Sarah Saunders, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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