

Inspection of a good school: The Douay Martyrs Catholic School

Edinburgh Drive, Ickenham, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB10 8QY

Inspection dates:

30 April and 1 May 2024

Outcome

The Douay Martyrs Catholic School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Fiona McCloskey. This school is part of The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Patrick Murden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Patrick Leeson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and happy at this school. The mental health and well-being of pupils is treated as a high priority. Staff listen to pupils' views. They provide opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities, including as pupil ambassadors for anti-bullying and safeguarding.

The school promotes high ambitions for all pupils. The school delivers a curriculum that enables pupils to learn effectively. Pupils attain high standards and are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They respond well to the high expectations set by the school, including for attendance and behaviour. Pupils typically take pride in their work. They contribute readily to discussions in class and concentrate on their work.

The school has raised its expectations for students in the sixth form. Students are committed to their studies and learning. Sixth-form students are positive role models for younger pupils. For example, they take pride in running a number of clubs and activities for pupils in Years 7 to 11.

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

The school has designed and implemented an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. The curriculum is broad. Pupils study a wide range of subjects from Year 7 to Year 11, including subjects such as modern foreign languages. In the sixth form, students have a wide choice of courses, including psychology and media studies.

The curriculum has been carefully designed to cover the knowledge and skills required for pupils to achieve well. The success of this is reflected in the school's strong outcomes, particularly at the end of Year 11. Staff identify pupils' individual needs accurately, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum, and pupils with SEND attain highly alongside their peers. For example, in English, staff adapt learning to help pupils appreciate and understand ambitious texts.

Staff encourage pupils to think back to prior learning to help with current learning. For example, in physical education, pupils in Year 9 used previous knowledge that they had been taught to improve their technique in javelin throwing. In history, pupils used model answers and other sources to help construct and expand their responses regarding the development of endowed hospitals in the 18th century. Sometimes, however, work selected for pupils to do in lessons does not support them to learn as effectively, and teaching explanations are sometimes unclear. This results in some gaps in pupils' knowledge, including for pupils with SEND.

Historically, the achievement of students in the sixth form has been variable. The school has had a sharp focus on improving academic outcomes and ensuring that sixth-form students know and remember more as they progress through their studies. For example, in a Year 12 economics class, students were able to distinguish different types of economics and explain the differences clearly, connecting them to real-life situations and their impact on the economy and society. Students in the sixth form appreciate the level of detail and support provided by staff to improve their learning and understanding.

The school is committed to supporting pupils who have fallen behind with reading. Staff identify weaker readers and use a range of strategies to help these pupils gain confidence and fluency in their reading. For example, students in the sixth form work with younger pupils in reading sessions.

Pupils are well looked after here and are supported with their mental health and well-being. Pupils have high levels of attendance. Staff build up strong relationships with pupils and their families. The school ensures that pupils who are deemed vulnerable get the support they need.

Pupils' personal development is well planned and delivered. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, arts and subject-based clubs. Pupils participate in concerts and productions. Various themed days include learning about different cultures, which promotes tolerance, faith and respect for each other. The careers programme is well structured. Events, including careers fairs and visiting speakers, provide pupils with helpful guidance. Students in the sixth form receive personalised information and advice on pathways towards universities and apprenticeships.

Staff are committed and loyal to the school. Their workload is considered, and leaders are mindful of the pressures placed on staff. The trust works closely with school leaders and oversees leaders' work to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the work pupils are set to do does not support their learning well, and teaching does not present information clearly. Where this is the case, pupils' understanding is not as secure, and pupils develop some gaps in their knowledge, including pupils with SEND. The school should ensure that staff present subject content clearly and select work that is focused on aiding all pupils' learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in October 2018.

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

Unique reference number	137925
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10323380
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,499
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	270
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patrick Leeson
CEO of the trust	Patrick Murden
Headteacher	Fiona McCloskey
Website	www.douaymartyrs.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school has a Catholic religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2019.
- 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 one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also sampled the curriculum in several other subject areas.
- The inspectors took into account responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils during lessons and social times.
- 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 met with senior school leaders, including those with responsibility for SEND.
- The lead inspector met with some members of the local governing body and trustees.

Inspection team

Ray Lau, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Booth	Ofsted Inspector
Heidi Swidenbank	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024