

Inspection of Highlands School

148 Worlds End Lane, London N21 1QQ

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness 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 March 2014. The school received an urgent inspection under section 8 of the Act on 13 and 14 July 2021. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are exceptionally 'proud to be part of Highlands'. They thrive in this diverse and inclusive school, exemplifying the 'DARE' values of determination, aspiration, respect and equality. Pupils develop positive relationships. They celebrate each other's differences in school events such as 'Culture and Heritage Day', mixing well socially. As one pupil said, representing the views of many, 'There is no divide here. We all get on together.' This helps to ensure pupils feel safe and are kept safe in school.

The curriculum, including in the sixth form, is ambitious, demonstrating the school's high expectations. Pupils readily participate in the vast range of activities on offer. The four 'DARE' days help to ensure pupils access visits, including to the Victoria and Albert Museum and Tower of London. The programme of outings extends to the sixth form, where students have benefited from watching a live theatre performance, a history tour to Berlin and a visit to Oxford University. The school ensures there are no barriers to prevent pupils from accessing the full extra-curricular offer.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They understand what is expected of them and show high levels of respect. This is because the school's approach to behaviour is one of 'prevention before sanction'. Pupils who need additional support to manage their behaviour receive the help they need.

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly, including in national examinations. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, secure a deep knowledge in the different subjects they learn. This is a result of the school's highly effective and consistent approach to delivering the well-designed curriculum. Each subject sets out precisely the most important knowledge, including key vocabulary, that pupils will learn and in what order. For example, in English, younger pupils explore writers' different methods. Older pupils build on this to make more nuanced and sophisticated inferences about the words writers use. This prepares pupils exceptionally well for their later learning.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. The school has rightly prioritised developing teachers' practice. As a result, teachers skilfully choose learning activities that best help build and secure pupils' knowledge over time. Assessment is used effectively to identify and correct any errors or misconceptions. As a result, these do not persist in pupils' work and prevent them from learning more complex ideas as they progress through the curriculum.

Pupils with SEND and those who struggle to read well are swiftly identified. Teachers are well supported to adapt their teaching and provide additional help for any pupils who need it. Pupils benefit from this approach, accessing the same ambitious curriculum as their peers wherever this is possible.

The school's high expectations for behaviour are well understood and consistently applied. Staff reinforce the school's messages when teaching the curriculum, delivering assemblies and during less structured times. Pupils meet these high expectations, displaying consistently positive attitudes to learning in class and outside of lessons. The school tracks any behaviour incidents carefully. Bullying and 'banter' are not tolerated. Any such incidents are swiftly identified and addressed through the personal, social and health education curriculum, assemblies and pastoral support.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's vision of developing confident, autonomous individuals is fully realised. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of societal values. For example, pupils participate in a mock election to develop their understanding of the importance of democracy. There is a comprehensive programme of careers advice and guidance. For example, all sixth-form students access an individual interview with a careers adviser. Pupils and students take part in high-quality work experience and have numerous opportunities to speak with a wide range of education providers and employers. This contributes to the different destinations students in the sixth form progress to.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have made sure that the school continues to provide an excellent education for its pupils. Leaders are highly effective because they are strongly analytical and are outward-facing. They work closely with the local authority as well as nationally recognised professionals. Engagement with staff, parents and carers and the wider community is strong and valued by leaders. Staff consider leaders to be highly considerate of their workload and well-being. They benefit from the training and development opportunities provided. Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the education and support their children receive.

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

Unique reference number	132256
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10345883
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
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	1,661
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matt Miller MBE
Headteacher	Vincent McInerney
Website	www.highlands.enfield.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Highlands School has a specially resourced provision for 15 deaf pupils, aged from 11 to 18.
- The school uses five registered alternative provisions.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met several staff and with a group of early career teachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, design and technology, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Lisa Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Hannah Glossop	His Majesty's Inspector
Charlotte Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Conway	His Majesty's Inspector

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