

Inspection of The Sacred Heart Language College

High Street, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 7AY

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of this school is Geraldine Higgins. This school is part of the Blessed Holy Family Catholic 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, Geraldine Higgins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Coyle.

Ofsted has not previously inspected The Sacred Heart Language College under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged The Sacred Heart Language College to be outstanding for overall effectiveness before it opened as an academy. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has an ethos of service to others and a community spirit. There is a wealth of opportunity for pupils to undertake leadership roles, develop their talents and interests and broaden their horizons. Pupils plan and deliver assemblies on topics such as neurodiversity and anti-bullying week. They support their peers through mentoring and freshers' fairs for enrichment activities. Many take part in charity and community events.

Pupils respond well to the school's challenge of pursuing excellence in all they do. They develop strong subject knowledge, which results in high outcomes in public examinations. The school provides an ambitious curriculum for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils' needs are identified swiftly, and the school provides effective support so that they achieve well alongside their peers.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. In class, pupils are highly motivated and enjoy their learning. Pupils are largely polite and courteous around the school site. However, at times, a few pupils' conduct falls short of the high expectations of the school. Most pupils show kindness and respect for one another. They are encouraged to have high aspirations and are consistently prepared for their next steps. Pupils feel safe and attend school well.

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

The school provides pupils with a broad and highly ambitious curriculum enriched by subjects such as classical civilisation and health studies. Teachers ensure that pupils learn and retain important knowledge across the range of subjects. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they deliver clearly and with enthusiasm.

The school has identified the knowledge that pupils will learn thoughtfully. This is taught in a logical order to build understanding. Ideas and new concepts are often revisited to ensure they are remembered. The school provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their knowledge. For example, in drama lessons, pupils craft their own scripts following guidance that builds their understanding of character and the effect they want to have on the audience. Similarly, in mathematics, pupils routinely apply their technical knowledge with regular practice and rehearsal of different mathematical methods to solve problems.

Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding and address gaps to develop pupils' skills and knowledge. They encourage pupils to reflect on their work and learn from their errors. Pupils typically produce work of a high quality, which they have great pride in. This includes pupils with SEND as they are well supported.

The school has established a strong culture of reading. Reading is celebrated in assemblies and is the bedrock of the curriculum. Staff choose books with care to promote engagement and broaden understanding. For example, the English curriculum was recently revised to mirror the interests of pupils with some ambitious choices, including

'The Crucible' in Year 9. Pupils who need additional support with their reading are quickly identified. They receive appropriate help so they become fluent readers.

Pupils focus on their learning in class and want to do well. The school is calm and orderly, and most pupils are responsible and well mannered. However, during social times, some pupils do not demonstrate the self-control or maturity of which they are capable. Occasionally, some pupils do not demonstrate a sense of urgency to get to lessons on time. However, pupils do value the education they receive and want to achieve highly in examinations.

The school provides a well-developed personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which is delivered through a carefully considered pastoral curriculum. Pupils develop into critical thinkers and consider wider issues such as equality of opportunity. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take an active role in school life. Pupils take their leadership roles seriously. Many pupils take up a range of clubs, including historical film club, orchestra, trampolining, and philosophy club. Pupils are aptly supported for their next steps in either education or employment. They receive a comprehensive careers programme and guidance. The school ensures that pupils are ready for life in modern Britain and know how to stay safe, including online.

Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Staff receive high-quality professional development and are highly positive about the school's collegiate culture. Leaders at all levels are reflective and committed to driving a culture of ambition in 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)

- Some pupils' conduct around the school is not as high as their behaviour in class. As a result, these pupils do not consistently meet the school's high expectations and do not present the positive attitudes and self-control of which they are capable. The school should ensure that pupils routinely apply the strong values they have learned so that they conduct themselves well throughout the school day.

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	146245
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10346065
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	808
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Coyle
CEO of the trust	Geraldine Higgins
Headteacher	Geraldine Higgins (executive headteacher)
Website	www.tshlc.harrow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust.
- The Sacred Heart Language College converted to become an academy in May 2019. When its predecessor school, The Sacred Heart Language College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character and is in the Archdiocese of Westminster. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was carried out in March 2019.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school clubs.
- 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). 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.
- 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 met with senior leaders, trustees, some teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, French, history, physical education and music. For each deep dive, the 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. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for school improvement.
- 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 took account of the views of pupils, parents and staff, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors checked the school's policies and records, including those related to behaviour and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff and spoke with pupils during social times. They observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including as they arrived and left school.

Inspection team

Sarah Saunders, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jennifer Bax	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Clemens	Ofsted Inspector
Ray Lau	Ofsted Inspector

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