

Inspection of Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School

St Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex RM14 2QR

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 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

The headteacher of this school is Vivienne Qurrey. This school is the only school in Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, a trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tracey Knight.

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 November 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this caring school community. Pupils are safe and well looked after. They believe that the school prepares them well for their next steps. They know how to stay safe online and in the outside world. The school prioritises teaching pupils about the importance of physical and mental health.

Pupils value the respectful rapport that they build with staff and each other. All pupils have a trusted adult they can speak to. Teachers are always there to help them to refine their work. Staff consistently hold the view that all pupils will achieve to the best of their ability. Pupils perform exceptionally well in their academic studies and in the wide range of enrichment activities that the school provides. Pupils gain confidence and resilience. They take on leadership roles such as form captains and mental health ambassadors. Pupils make a notable contribution to charities, including a well-known charity for overseas development.

Pupils demonstrate strong attitudes to learning. They said that it is rare for pupils to misbehave or to be mean to others. Pupils do not tolerate any unkind or disrespectful behaviour. Consequently, it rarely happens. In the unusual case that it does, pupils have full confidence in staff to intervene. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for their younger peers.

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

The school provides all pupils with an ambitious and broad curriculum. This helps pupils to make well-informed option choices in Year 9. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum. The school is adept at identifying undiagnosed SEND and ensuring that staff are well trained in understanding pupils' individual needs. Staff make adaptations to the curriculum that will help these pupils to achieve highly. Pupils are tested in reading on their arrival at the school. Staff use this information to ensure that any interventions are sharply focused. Reading for pleasure is an important part of the school's culture. Pupils enjoy completing reading challenges and make frequent use of the school library. Teachers emphasise the importance of wider reading, including in the sixth form.

Across subjects, the curriculum is well designed. The school has considered the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need. There are frequent opportunities to revisit key concepts. In history, for instance, pupils return to ideas of political power and empire in their study of Britain, Africa and Germany. Teachers set tasks that help pupils to secure a deep and rich understanding of taught content. Pupils approach their work more independently as they move through the school.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They routinely check pupils' understanding and use this information to inform their teaching. Teachers address any misconceptions quickly. Throughout the school, pupils receive precise and helpful feedback. This enables them to improve their work. Teachers' open-door policy means that sixth-form students can access additional help.

Pupils work hard and are keen to do well. They are exceptionally focused in lessons. Behaviour around the school is also impressive. Pupils show high levels of respect for others. The vast majority attend school every day. They appreciate the rewards that they receive for high levels of attendance. Staff know each pupil well. They work sensitively with families in rare cases of persistent absence.

Pupils enjoy an exceptional offer beyond the academic. This is highly valued by parents and carers. It includes a well-sequenced personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils learn about topics such as consent and gaslighting at an age-appropriate level. Sixth-form students learn how to be alert to danger when socialising. The school makes judicious use of guest speakers to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils have a strong understanding of the protected characteristics. Pupils also have a voice in the running of the school. A highlight of the year is the competitive 'house music' or 'house drama' event. The majority of pupils take part, either in the performance or behind the scenes. Pupils also enjoy the annual celebration of their multi-cultural school community. There are a huge range of lunch and after-school clubs that pupils are keen to attend. These include sports, music and drama.

The school provides comprehensive provision for careers information, education, advice and guidance. Pupils access impartial careers advice. They benefit from work experience and the school's careers event. This is attended by employers and education institutions. Sixth-form students are guided in their applications for university or apprenticeships.

All staff are proud to work at the school. They speak highly of leaders' consideration for their workload and well-being. Staff at all levels get focused opportunities to develop professionally. Governors know the school well. They show a secure understanding of their role in providing support and challenge to leaders.

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	137233
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10345925
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	831
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tracey Knight
Headteacher	Vivienne Qurrey
Website	www.sacredheartofmary.net
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart of Mary is a Roman Catholic school for girls in Years 7 to 13.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection to evaluate its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Catholic school was in March 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school currently makes use of three providers of alternative provision.
- 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 (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 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 met with leaders and staff in the school, including those responsible for the quality of education, behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding and sixth form.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the board of trustees. They spoke to a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into English, history, mathematics and science. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate 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 inclusive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors looked at responses to Ofsted's online pupil, staff and parent surveys.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jeff Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Cross	Ofsted Inspector

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