

Halcyon London International School

33 Seymour Place, London W1H 5AU

Inspection dates

4–6 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The outstanding leadership of the director has ensured that the school has improved substantially since its last inspection.
- Pupils achieved very well overall in the 2016 international assessments. Pupils currently in the school make outstanding progress.
- Leaders and staff have created a culture which brings out the best in everyone, where morale is high and where parents can be confident that their children are safe from harm.
- Teaching over time is outstanding. Teachers plan activities that engage pupils in their learning. They give insightful feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- The electronic system used for ongoing assessment and feedback is well embedded. Pupils and teachers benefit greatly from the information it generates.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils are resilient and very thoughtful in their approach to tackling problems.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well in lessons and around school. They are polite, courteous and respectful, and they work very hard to achieve their ambitions.
- Staff give pupils exceptional opportunities to take responsibility for many aspects of school life. They are very well prepared to become the leaders of tomorrow.
- Trustees make a strong contribution to the school. They are very well informed and hold leaders to account firmly and rigorously.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Excellent teaching and assessment have been instrumental in bringing about very strong outcomes.
- Although the achievement of individual pupils is rigorously tracked, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and that of the most able pupils, are not analysed as distinct from that of other groups.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and the associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and that of the most able pupils are closely tracked and monitored maximising the use of the school's current coaching and mentoring strategies to ensure that all teaching is consistently effective in meeting the learning needs of the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The director and trustees have high expectations for the school and provide a first-class education for pupils. Together, they have created the right conditions to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress. As a result, outcomes are strong across the curriculum, and pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school has made excellent progress since the previous inspection. For example, leaders have strengthened the curriculum by embedding key skills across different subjects. Attention to detail and acting on the outcomes of the evaluations of the school's performance are two key features which underpin the school's success.
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment is regular and thorough. Leaders are uncompromising and ensure that high-quality teaching is sustained. Feedback provides clear guidance on areas for development, with opportunities for staff to refine their skills, for example through the provision of coaching and mentoring. Consequently, the quality of teaching is consistently effective in all subjects.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' well-being and academic progress are effective. Leaders analyse a range of assessment information and homework tasks to assess pupils' progress. They use their findings skilfully to amend the curriculum to ensure that pupils have the support needed to make rapid progress. For example, pupils at risk of falling behind sign up to a comprehensive learning agreement, which is closely monitored. Thus, leaders ensure that they consistently sustain the school's ethos and provide equality of opportunity for all.
- All teachers are held to account for pupils' progress. In addition, a wide range of evidence is secured to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers and administration staff. This demonstrates leaders' steadfast approach to setting the bar high for expectations of all staff.
- The curriculum provides pupils with substantial insight into a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. A key feature is the provision of depth, which enables pupils to grow in confidence, express their viewpoints, debate and ask probing questions when exploring topics. Additionally, the curriculum is enriched by a range of wider learning opportunities before and after school each day. Pupils have opportunities to take part in regional and international activities. Annual school performances tap into, and extend, their artistic skills. All these experiences have a profound impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which the school promotes very effectively.
- Staff are outstanding role models to pupils. They and pupils exemplify respect, tolerance and equality, which provide the firm foundations on which fundamental British values can thrive. Pupils show empathy and demonstrate awareness and acceptance of each other's needs to a high degree. Pupils are educated to be responsible citizens who are very well prepared for life in a multicultural and diverse society.
- Staff have secure knowledge about the strengths and development areas of individual pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders use this information to tailor provision accordingly and monitor the impact of their work. However, leaders do not analyse the achievement of this key group across the school as

an integral part of the evaluation of its own performance.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work and the significant impact that it has had on their children's lives. Almost all parents responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire.

Governance

- Governance is very effective and adds to the capacity of the school to continue on its very successful journey of school improvement. The trustees have a detailed understanding of the school's strategic priorities and know which sources to tap for high-quality advice and guidance. For example, effective marketing strategies have enabled the school to expand rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Systems and structures are embedded to facilitate robust challenge and support for the director, for example by responding to the contents of the bi-monthly director's report to the board of trustees. As a result, trustees remain sharply focused on the quality of teaching and outcomes for all pupils.
- Trustees have an in-depth knowledge of what the school does well and what could be improved further. They discharge their duties relating to safeguarding and the curriculum very well, for example by ensuring that the staffing and resources are available to provide a rich learning experience for all pupils.
- Currently, trustees are in the process of further improving their efficiency and effectiveness by setting up committee structures reflecting key aspects of their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and the trustees have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and followed meticulously. The school's policy for safeguarding is comprehensive and shared with parents. Statutory checks ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. All staff have current knowledge of safeguarding requirements and are vigilant about the risks posed to pupils.
- The school makes very good use of the expertise of specialist staff. Referrals are timely, and pupils are protected from potential harm. Staff are vigilant and, because of the high level of trust, pupils turn to them without hesitation. Any concerns regarding the safety or welfare of children are acted on quickly and appropriately. Consequently, the school has a culture of safety where pupils' welfare is a priority.
- The curriculum covers all aspects of safeguarding and ensures that pupils understand the basic rules of keeping safe, whether online, in school or out of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers know their pupils very well and engage them quickly in their work. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Pupils rise to the challenge and routinely produce work of high quality.
- Teachers are very effective in developing pupils' confidence and love for learning. In a history lesson, for example, pupils held animated discussions about the reliability of five different sources of evidence in the context of the question, 'Who set fire to the Reichstag in 1939?'
- Teachers are passionate about teaching their subjects at Halcyon. Strong subject knowledge permeates the curriculum and provides deeper meaning to concepts which straddle across different subjects. For example, many teachers are skilful in teaching themes from different perspectives, and this sustains high levels of concentration.
- All elements of pupils' literacy skills are highly developed because teaching in a wide range of subjects constantly reinforces the application of these skills. For example, pupils are able to infer, make deductions and comment on the use of language when discussing the big ideas in different subjects. In addition, teachers encourage pupils to become inquisitive and give them opportunities to engage in debate or intervene with pertinent questions during teaching.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their thinking and reasoning skills in mathematics. Teachers are ambitious for pupils, and reinforce these skills through setting and assessing challenging work. The most able pupils, in particular, respond well to probing questions and benefit from the range of feedback that is provided. This gives teachers the opportunity to deal with misconceptions and extend thinking and helps pupils to know how they can improve their work.
- Teaching is challenging across all subjects, and teachers demonstrate a passion for pupils to gain deep knowledge of subjects taught. For example, in 'Explorations' pupils acquire deeper contextual knowledge and understanding about a subject, for instance coding, synthesising music or designing a graphic novel. This equips them with the skills they need to apply their learning to creating a design project, which is then showcased.
- The small class sizes help pupils to flourish, particularly as support is intensive and there is more time to work with them. Pupils' work is checked regularly on the electronic system that the school has established for assessment and feedback. Pupils are adept at accessing this feedback and speak very positively about how it helps them to improve.
- Although there are considerable strengths in teaching across the curriculum, just occasionally it is less effective. This happens, for example, when teachers do not assess some pupils' understanding of a concept well enough, in particular the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; hence, on these occasions, learning is not maximised for these pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are articulate and confident learners, happy to engage in mature discussions about their learning and progress. The use of reasoning to support what they were saying was a consistent feature of interactions between pupils and between pupils and adults during the inspection.
- Pupils are proud of being a part of the school and speak glowingly about the benefits derived from the high-quality care, guidance and support provided. In the words of a pupil, 'We are treated with great respect and we want to show the same attitudes to teachers.' Pupils, like their parents, see the school as remarkable in the way it harnesses their strengths and interests and maximises their potential.
- Pupils know the meaning of self-discipline, which is very strong and a key feature of the school's culture. They adopt the school's ethos effortlessly, are responsive to instructions and self-regulate without constant supervision.
- Careers education and guidance has been well thought through and is of excellent quality. Pupils explore the world of work through project work as a part of their citizenship education. A range of visitors, including parents from different professions, provide pupils with additional information about a variety of academic and vocational pathways.
- Leaders emphasise fundamental British values, including the rule of law, respect and tolerance of others and knowledge of British institutions. Pupils participate in democratic processes to choose elements of their curriculum and undertake debates on current affairs in many subjects. As a result, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain and ready for their next stages of education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are very skilful in taking responsibility for their own behaviour, in classes and around the school. For example, in the scheduled fire drill during the inspection, pupils' behaviour was impeccable throughout, and the whole experience was very calm and orderly.
- The environment is calm and convivial, and relationships are excellent. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are very rare, and the overwhelming majority of parents said that behaviour is very good.
- Records show that there are very few incidents, and, if they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and decisively. The systematic and structured approach to managing behaviour has been very successful, resulting in no exclusions in the past few years.
- Pupils are very knowledgeable about the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based and homophobic bullying. This is supported by pupils' excellent understanding of

what to do if they or one of their peers experiences any type of bullying. The school teaches pupils very effectively how to exercise tolerance.

- Pupils' attendance levels are above average, and punctuality to lessons is excellent. They enjoy coming to school and are rarely absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Standards are high, and pupils make outstanding progress over time. Pupils study the international baccalaureate middle years programme in grades six to 10 (Years 7 to 11). Results in interdisciplinary English and the personal project by the end of the 10th grade (Year 11), show that the vast majority of pupils achieve very well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils often enter the school with typically average and, in some cases, above-average levels of achievement compared to the level of ability usually associated with their chronological age. This is particularly true in reading and writing. The school fosters a love of reading by giving pupils access to a range of stimulating texts, which, in turn, improves their vocabulary and understanding of how to write in a way that captures the imagination of the reader. As a result, pupils make strong progress in English, which helps to generate a thirst for learning across other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils are articulate and listen keenly before giving well thought-out responses. Teachers encourage them to become inquisitive and give them opportunities to engage in debate or intervene with pertinent questions during teaching. Writing is a strength, and standards in all year groups are above average. Pupils command and use a wide and varied vocabulary accurately. They have a very good understanding of how to organise their writing coherently into paragraphs.
- The school's assessments and work in pupils' electronic portfolios show that pupils' progress since joining the school is rapid, across a wide range of subjects. In mathematics for example, the most-able pupils make strong progress and maintain above-average standards as a result of acting on the consistently good-quality verbal and written feedback provided by their teachers. Developing the reasoning skills required to solve deeper mathematical problems is a strong feature of the school's work, and the most-able pupils thrive on this approach.
- Pupils communicate their knowledge and opinions with eloquence, for example in humanities and technology subjects, when analysing and evaluating evidence. They support their views with well-reasoned arguments and draw on their own understanding of the world around them.
- Pupils make effective progress in science and use complex subject-specific language to discuss their learning. They quickly acquire analytical and investigative skills because they are encouraged to think for themselves, and teachers' questioning rapidly deepens their understanding of scientific concepts.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make rapid progress across the curriculum. They benefit from accessing the electronic tools and resources provided in all lessons, which complement the teacher's direct input. Although no individual pupil falls through the net, the school does not track the achievement of these pupils and that of the most-able pupils as groups in their own right. This limits somewhat

the sharpness of the school's self-evaluation.

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the sixth-form provision.
- The students in current grade 12 (Year 13) are the first cohort to study the international baccalaureate diploma programme. All students have made very strong progress from their starting points; most are on track to reach above-average standards in their diploma subjects.
- All grade 12 students have had offers from universities of their choice to study their chosen subject in higher education. The school's progress information shows that current grade 11 (Year 12) students are also on track to achieve above-average standards in the diploma programme. This is supported by scrutiny of students' work, which matches the standards indicated by the school's achievement information.
- Leaders set high expectations and are relentless in monitoring students' achievement. They consistently support students and improve provision, by reviewing individual programmes of study. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment very effectively to ensure that it meets the needs of all students with precision.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Across a range of subjects, students engage in mature debate and discussion to tackle challenging issues. Teachers are adept in using extended questioning to probe the understanding of all students, especially the most able. Consequently, students deepen their learning, and this generates an even greater thirst for acquiring more knowledge.
- Attendance, punctuality, behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Students thoroughly enjoy their studies and apply themselves diligently to their work. They are excellent role models in the hard work and resilience that they demonstrate, coupled with the determination to succeed.
- Effective careers advice and guidance ensure that students take electives that are well matched to their ability and aspirations. High-quality support means that all complete the courses that they start in grade 11. The university guidance counsellor provides excellent guidance in grades 11 and 12, which prepares students very well for when they leave school.

School details

Unique reference number	139415
DfE registration number	213/6001
Inspection number	10026298

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	28
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Halcyon London International School
Chair	Achim Beck
Director	Barry Mansfield
Annual fees (day pupils)	£21,975–£22,950
Telephone number	020 7258 1169
Website	www.halcyonschool.com
Email address	hello@halcyonschool.com
Date of previous inspection	14–16 January 2014

Information about this school

- Halcyon was registered, in February 2013, as an independent co-educational international day school for up to 60 pupils aged from 11 to 15 years. It opened in September 2013. It is located in buildings owned by the West London Synagogue, which is close to Marble Arch, in central London. It makes use of a nearby leisure centre for physical education and a park for sport and recreation. The school has no religious affiliation.

- There are currently 129 pupils on roll, aged from 11 to 18 years. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school educates a small minority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school teaches the International Baccalaureate (IB): pupils in grades 6 to 10 (Years 7 to 11) are taught the middle years programme (MYP); pupils in grades 11 and 12 (Years 12 and 13) are taught the diploma programme (DP).
- Halcyon receives pupils from all around the world and locally, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- The school reflects the aims of the IB, which are: 'to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.'
- An inspection took place in June 2016 to consider the school's application for a material change to extend the age range from 11 to 16 years to 11 to 18 and to increase the number of pupils on roll from 75 to 135. This was subsequently recommended and approved.
- The current director was appointed in August 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons, two of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at break, lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their electronic portfolios in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the director, other leaders, the chair of the board of trustees and two other founding trustees.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and around the school.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school action plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes of the board of trustees meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 92 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and 39 responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

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