

Our Lady's High School Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 15. 5.23

1. Will parents be invited to face-to-face or online meetings?

Learning from parents is important for helping ensure a strong positive trajectory for the school. The school will build on their thoughts and respond to their ideas. Meetings have been scheduled both online and in person.

0. Will admitting boys to the school cause confusion/challenge for teachers?

Most teachers in the school have taught both boys and girls in their careers. Many have worked in mixed schools previously and some classes in the sixth form are already mixed. Staff will be offered training and support to help them respond to changes. The national curriculum is the same for boys and girls. Most staff have expressed their support for this change.

0. Will boys be admitted to all year groups from the beginning?

No. For the first year, boys will only be admitted to Year 7. It will take five years for all year groups to become mixed. All girls presently in the school will continue to be taught in girls only classes through to year 11.

0. Will the school set out the processes to enable the change in advance so that there can be careful planning around any areas of risk to make sure it is a smooth transition

Absolutely. One of the reasons for starting conversations now is to allow time for change management processes to be put in place well in advance of possible changes before Sep 2024. We will co-create a new exciting school. We will build on existing qualities to grow as a school continuing our journey to outstanding.

0. There have been a lot of changes. Will this be another upheaval?

There have been changes, and there always will be in a school. Recent changes have been very positive for the school and this proposal is part of the forward planning to strengthen the school. There is greater change management expertise in the school now to support transitions. We are using meetings like this to make sure disruption is minimised

0. How will the impact of the change be monitored? Could parents be more involved?

Parent feedback is an important part of making sure we are aware of and can respond to any glitches. The Senior Leadership Team are actively involved around the school and monitor behaviour in, and the quality of, lessons as well as outside the classroom. Governors monitor outcomes closely.

0. Will the young people's modesty be compromised?

We believe it is important to teach young people to grow up understanding respect and responsibility to prepare them for adult life. Mixed classes better support understanding because boys and girls learn from each other with teachers guiding them, rather than not growing together and therefore never learning how they should respect and empathise with each other.

0. Will all lessons be together?

Some lessons will remain single sex, e.g. PE and perhaps some SRE but all other subjects will be mixed.

0. Will mixed lessons lead to more talk of girlfriends and boyfriends?

Whatever the structure of school, young people will always be interested in relationships (and find ways to explore them).

0. Will adding boys mean larger class sizes?

Class sizes vary in the school, depending on the needs of the young people. In some cases it is advantageous to have a slightly larger class supported with a TA. Some young people need to be in a much smaller group. Admitting boys to the school will not increase class sizes.

0. Children coming to our school have all come from mixed primary schools so this should not be a problem for them.

We agree. We think that girls in years 8,9,10 and 11 might need some support to adjust.

0. What will the gender balance in the classes be?

It is difficult to tell at this time and will vary depending on the number of boys enrolled.

0. How will you protect good behaviour?

Behaviour in school is good and expectations are high. Attitudes to learning are strong and the school will continue to reinforce the expectation of excellent behaviour in the community.

0. What do the children think about the proposal/ Are you asking their views?

Young people's views will be sought, working with the School Council. Pupil voice will be listened to and responded to but theirs is not the final voice.

0. Will you base the planning on learning from other schools?

Yes, there are a number of Catholic Schools that have changed recently to become co-educational (mixed). We have visited the most successful of these to learn from them and will continue to work in partnership to share best practice. Many staff have already worked in excellent co-educational schools.

0. Are the particular needs of pupils with SEND being fully considered?

Staff will think carefully about this and learn from best practice elsewhere. There may be a need to meet needs individually, and there may be some mixed and some single sex groups. That is common in mixed schools.

0. What is the evidence on which is better for girls, single sex or mixed schools?

NFER 2002 - no clear difference, more recently, Smithers Report 2017, also no clear evidence. Utrecht 2017, international study found that boys did better, particularly in reading where more than 60% of the school population were girls. Other benefits are considered to be better gender understanding, and attitudes to learning, but there is little clear evidence either educationally or socially. Good schools are good schools regardless of intake. Several other Catholic Schools have moved to mixed provision with positive impact. The number of single sex schools is declining.

0. Will the school be larger causing more community disruption?

The transition to a coeducational setting will not lead to an increase in pupil admission numbers.

0. Will there be a new school uniform, how much will it cost?

We would like to take this opportunity to re-launch the school – restating and strengthening our commitment to excellence and ambition. A new uniform would help give a clear message that our school has a strong future drive with high expectations for girls and boys. Governors will look at subsidising the cost of new uniform for existing students.

0. Will there be separate cloakrooms and changing rooms?

Yes. There will be separate toilets and changing rooms.

21. Will staff pay or conditions be affected?

No there is no change to the employer and there will be no change to staff terms and conditions.

22. Will there be any change to the values, ethos and Catholic aims of the school.

No these will not change. Our commitment to Servite values underpinning quality Catholic education will remain. By opening our doors to boys as well as girls we are giving more young people the chance to access a Catholic education.

23. Will teachers be able to teach boys

Most of our teachers worked in mixed schools previously and all of them were trained to teach boys and girls. There will be training and support for teachers, all our staff are confident to facilitate shared learning.

24. If the aim is to extend the curriculum why not do it now?

We are always looking for opportunities to extend the curriculum – for example extending our food technology department and appointing a new music teacher. Offering a wider range of options is dependent on finance – and our finances are dictated by our number of pupils. Admitting boys will enable us to fill places to support a wider curriculum.

25. I really wanted a girls only Catholic School for my daughter but there are very few.

More and more schools are becoming co-educational to prepare students for life. In our part of the Borough it can be hard for boys to find a secondary school place because the schools are mainly girls schools and there is no boys school. We are introducing boys from Year 7 so that those of you who specifically chose a girls only school will not be taught with boys.

26. Will becoming co-educational mean that there are fewer girls accepted into the school?

Although there will be fewer girls places the demographic changes in the area mean that there are fewer girls seeking places so this is unlikely to be a challenge. The school does not have to have 50:50 boys and girls and the balance is likely to change gradually. Becoming co-educational would better reflect the gender balance of young people seeking school places.

27. Will mid-year admissions of boys be allowed?

Mid-year admissions of boys will only be allowed into year groups that were co-educational from Year 7. That will mean that (at the earliest) in 2024/5 there will only be boys in Year 7.

28. Is the reason for this change that there are not enough girls needing places at the school?

Yes.

29. Would improving results at the school increase the number of girls applying?

The school is on an upward trajectory and continues its improvement journey to constantly improve outcomes year -on-year. *The DFE data for progress indicate that girls at Our Lady's make strong progress, nationally and within Hackney. This indicates that taking into account their starting point when they joined the school the students make more progress than they might in other schools. This information is taken from DFEs comparator data website.*

<https://www.find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk/school/100282/our-lady's-catholic-high-school/secondary>

Progress 8 score ?

This score shows how much progress pupils at this school made across 8 qualifications between the end of key stage 2 and the end of key stage 4.

The score for this school is **0.12**.

The local authority (Hackney) average score for state-funded schools is 0.04.

The average score for all state-funded schools in England is -0.03.

Part of the benefit of a change to the school admissions is the opportunity to restate our values and ambitions. The current leadership drive for school improvement is will

continue to focus on driving forward higher outcomes whilst continuing to meet individual needs.

30. Will parents and young people be included in discussions about the new school uniform and possible school name change?

Yes we will talk with students and parents about options before governors reach decisions on either of these.

31. It would be helpful to have more information about the impact on other local schools.

The formal Statutory Notice will include details of numbers at other schools. The PAN for Our Lady's will not change, so the possible number of young people attending will remain 120. High vacancy rates mean there is space to accommodate boys. There are no boys places available in the local area. The nearest boys places are at Waterside Academy (2.6 miles). The nearest Catholic Boys places available are at Bishop Challoner School in Tower Hamlets.

School Name	2023/24			2022/23		
	PAN	Vacancies	Waiting List	PAN	Vacancies	Waiting List
Our Lady's High School	120	54	0	120	40	0
Cardinal Pole Catholic School	180	0	15	180	-5	11
Lubavitch Senior Girls School	30	13	2	30	-2	0
Mossbourne Community Academy	216	0	467	216	-5	54
Skidders' Academy	180	0	34	366	-6	10
Stoke Newington School and Sixth Form	255	0	118	255	0	22
The Petchey Academy	180	0	10	180	-7	1
Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls School	80	0	5	80	10	0