

Inspection of Moulsham High School

Brian Close, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9ES

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school of opportunity.

Leaders and teachers have very high expectations. They work with great enthusiasm and skill to secure exceptional achievements for pupils. The school values of 'enjoy, enrich and achieve' make sure that the strong academic successes secured by pupils over time fit into a bigger picture. The school helps pupils to become inspired and well-rounded individuals.

Pupils experience a rich and expansive education. From the day they join to the day they leave, pupils learn in depth about a wide range of subjects. They respond extremely well to leaders' and teachers' ambitions for them. Year after year, very high outcomes reflect the superb education pupils in all year groups receive.

Pupils are safe from bullying and they respect others' differences. The LGBTQ club, for instance, was suggested by students. It is a well-known club and respected. Most pupils take part in the clubs and activities on offer. They are well supported to choose future pathways for when they leave the school. Pupils take on leadership roles and support charities. There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to take part in things that reflect their skills and interests, which help to prepare them for later life.

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

Underlying the exceptional quality of education is the depth with which the curriculum has been thought through. Topics are linked, revisited, checked and built upon to ensure that pupils learn extremely well. Any gaps in pupils' understanding are quickly picked up and addressed.

The curriculum has been developed and embedded over time. Staff have a strong shared understanding of what they are trying to achieve. They teach with skill and commitment to pupils' success. The national curriculum is only the starting point. Leaders and teachers want pupils to be engrossed by their subjects.

The quality of education is a joy to see. Examples of very strong practice are easy to find. Teachers' enthusiasm for English is infectious. Pupils have pride and fluency in Spanish. Art work is of a very high standard. High expectations and outcomes are evident across the curriculum in all year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or abilities (SEND) receive high-quality teaching. Leaders understand pupils' needs and share effective strategies with teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, pupils with SEND learn very well.

Pupils behave in a positive manner. They listen attentively and are keen to complete their work to a high standard. They are often eager and driven to learn. Lessons generally proceed free from interruption. Behaviour around the school is calm and

pupils are polite. The atmosphere in the school is productive and positive, making the school a nice place to be. There are some occasions when pupils' behaviour falls short of leaders' high expectations. This has led to an increase in exclusions and to some dissatisfaction from a small number of parents and carers. Pupils agree that behaviour is good with scope to be better still.

Time for pupils to consider different aspects of their world is mapped out in a joined-up programme. The programme includes tutor time, assemblies, dedicated lessons and learning across the curriculum. It includes a wide range of important themes, including different religions, how to stay safe and different aspects of being a citizen. This already very strong provision is being further enhanced by a new well-designed programme to specifically develop pupils' character.

Beyond lessons, sixth-form students benefit from inspirational speakers in weekly 'cultural capital' sessions. Across the school, the 'matching selfie with shelfie' competition is part of a wider push to promote reading for pleasure, and subject areas set themselves challenging targets to encourage ever-greater participation in the enrichment activities they offer. There are lots of clubs and trips, with high levels of pupil participation.

The strengths seen elsewhere in the school are equally evident in the sixth form. Expectations are high, and students' next steps well catered for. Advice and guidance for students takes into account their aptitudes and interests. Academic and vocational educational routes are appropriately considered for all pupils at the end of key stage 4 and key stage 5.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They are taught to keep safe and know they have adults to talk to in the school if they are worried about something.

Leaders maintain an accurate record of pre-employment checks on adults who work in the school. They ensure that staff have up-to-date training. They follow up concerns about pupils' welfare in a timely fashion, including with external agencies where appropriate.

Some aspects of the system for staff to share concerns with leaders are not straightforward. Information is being passed on in different ways by different people, which leads to too much inconsistency.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' systems for sharing information in the school about pupils' welfare are not as clear cut as they should be. There is some inconsistency between staff in

the methods they use to pass information on. Leaders should establish clear systems that are always used by all staff to record and pass on information about pupils' welfare.

- Some pupils' behaviour falls short of leaders' high expectations. Exclusions have risen, and a few parents are dissatisfied with pupils' behaviour. Leaders should ensure that pupils consistently manage their own behaviour well.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136863
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110349
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1538
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	252
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Keith Mogford
Headteacher	Julia Mead
Website	http://www.moulshamhigh.org
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bridge Academy Trust. The trust holds school leaders to account through the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust (CEO).
- The school makes use of the Heybridge Co-operative Academy to provide education for a small number of its pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We did deep dives in the following subjects: English, Spanish, history, business studies and mathematics. We met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons and

reviewed pupils' work in these subjects, as well as speaking with teachers and pupils.

- In addition to the deep dives, we looked at provision in other subjects, visiting lessons, reviewing pupils' work and speaking with leaders.
- We spoke with the headteacher and other leaders, the CEO of the trust, and members of the local governing body and trust. We reviewed minutes of governing body meetings.
- We reviewed the school's information on behaviour and attendance. We reviewed safeguarding records and pastoral records, and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements. We held several meetings to discuss the leadership of safeguarding.
- We considered the 106 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View and the 55 responses to the free-text option; the 47 responses to Ofsted's staff survey; and the 177 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- We spoke with staff and pupils about different aspects of provision.

Inspection team

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