

Inspection of a good school: Claydon High School

Church Lane, Claydon, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0EG

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 September 2021

Outcome

Claydon High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Claydon High School play an active role in school life. Pupils' views are listened to. This contributes towards there being a transparent culture of openness, in which pupils can discuss any concerns. Bullying is rare, but if it occurs pupils are confident leaders would deal with it quickly. Pupils say that this makes them feel safe and supported.

Pupils take pride in their learning and focus when in lessons. Around the school site and in classes, pupils behave well. They are self-confident, and polite and respectful towards both adults and each other.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to find out about the wider world. In all year groups, pupils learn how they can be successful in their future careers. They develop various 'life' skills through, for example, volunteering and applying for a range of school leadership positions. Teachers challenge pupils to reflect on the rights and responsibilities of life in modern Britain to support pupils in their personal development.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experience at the school. Parents typically comment that, 'Every staff member proves again and again that they have the best interests of my child at heart.'

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

Leaders have developed a well-considered curriculum. In all subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn. Leaders make sure this builds on what pupils already know. While the curriculum is fully in place, the result of this being that pupils achieve well, there are occasions when a few subject leaders are less able to explain what to teach and when. In these instances, subject leaders have not completed their training to be fully effective in their role.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. As well as delivering the planned content, teachers plan effectively to ensure that pupils develop a depth of knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils know and remember more. This enables pupils to be able to confidently apply what they know to a wide variety of contexts and scenarios. For example, in history, pupils compare the behaviours of the Nazis to the conflict in Afghanistan, and to debates over the Black Lives Matters movement. Teachers revisit learning to ensure that pupils remember and understand it. As a result, pupils are appropriately challenged as they learn to improve.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to know more and be able to do more, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify pupils' needs accurately and provide teachers with well-considered strategies to help them adapt their planning for pupils with SEND. This information is used to ensure that pupils with SEND receive effective support. As a result, pupils with SEND are able to access all areas of the curriculum and achieve well.

The importance of reading is prioritised. Teachers check pupils are reading books they understand and enjoy. Leaders identify and help the weakest readers effectively. Because of this, some pupils who received phonics support in Year 7 are now reading fluently in Year 8.

Leaders have high expectations of how pupils behave. While a few pupils told inspectors that some teachers do not apply the behaviour policy as strictly as others, behaviour does not stop pupils learning.

Most pupils attend well. Leaders challenge the low expectations of some staff about attendance. The attendance of the most disadvantaged pupils has improved significantly. However, some of these pupils still miss too much of their education through absence. While plans are in place to address this, the pandemic has slowed this work, and some of it is still in its early stages of making a difference.

Staff are grateful for the support leaders give them. Leaders provide effective training for staff. This helps staff feel confident in their roles.

Those responsible for governance, the academy committee, know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Where needed, the trust provides helpful training and support for leaders and staff. Members of the academy committee challenge leaders effectively, such as in monitoring attendance.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that training for some leaders, and attendance, may usefully serve as areas for focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders encourage pupils to voice any worries they have to inform them where there are concerns and issues. Leaders respond promptly to these. Pupils say they feel safe, and parents and staff agree.

Leaders keep detailed and well-ordered records. They make referrals to agencies quickly when they need to and follow up concerns swiftly. Leaders know the risks in the local area, and the content of aspects of pupils' curriculum teaches pupils to be aware of and avoid the potential risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are not able to fully explain their curriculum intent well. While pupils achieve well, it results in these leaders being less effective in their role when communicating to and supporting teachers. Leaders need to continue their work to provide training for all subject leaders. This is to ensure that they all understand the rationale for their subject plans to support them to effectively fulfil their role in helping staff to deliver a high quality of education.
- The most disadvantaged pupils are absent from too many lessons. While leaders have put in place plans to address this, the plans are in their early stages of being implemented. Leaders need to sustain this focus to ensure that the attendance of these vulnerable pupils improves.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, also called Claydon High School, to be good in June 2014.

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.

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	144214
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10200453
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	774
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan Waters
Headteacher	Maeve Taylor
Website	www.claydonhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 June 2017, as part of the South Suffolk Learning Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed on a temporary basis in September 2017 and became the substantive headteacher in April 2018.
- The chair of the academy committee was appointed in February 2018.
- The chair of trustees was appointed in May 2021.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils and those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and school policies.
- Science, history, design and technology and English were considered in detail to evaluate the quality of education. In each subject, inspectors carried out meetings with subject leaders, visited lessons, had discussions with staff and pupils and looked at pupils' work.

- Inspectors reviewed the 61 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 46 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 52 responses to the staff survey and 79 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Her Majesty’s Inspector

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