

# Inspection of Valentines High School

Cranbrook Road, Ilford, Essex IG2 6HX

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

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 since October 2006.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders strive for excellence in all aspects of the school's work. Staff pay close attention to helping every pupil achieve academic excellence and mature into successful, thoughtful and active citizens.

Pupils are determined to succeed. They work hard throughout lessons and concentrate fully on their work. For example, sixth-form students work with diligence when learning in the independent study room.

Pupils and sixth-form students are happy in school. They enjoy each other's company and offer a warm welcome to those who are new to the school. Pupils are respectful and get along well with all. As a result, the school is a harmonious community and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils know how to raise any concerns and are confident that staff will deal with them quickly.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many well-planned activities that support their personal development. Staff actively seek pupils' views and opinions and act on these. For instance, following pupils' suggestions, boxercise and karate clubs have been recently introduced. Promoting pupils' mental and physical health is always at the forefront of leaders' work. Staff are also keen to support pupils' unique talents. They help pupils find opportunities to nurture and extend their interests, for example in music, art and debating.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious academic and personal development curriculum. Leaders are never complacent and always seek improvement. They continually adapt plans to meet the changing needs of pupils, the local area and current events. For instance, leaders have done their utmost to overcome disruptions to pupils' learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders aimed to ensure that pupils did not develop gaps in knowledge. They prioritised making sure that remote education focused tightly on delivering the planned curriculum. Leaders also tracked pupils' participation closely. Those who needed extra help and resources received them promptly. When pupils returned to school, leaders checked their well-being and learning. They took effective action to support pupils who needed it. For instance, they appointed specialist staff to increase the support available for pupils' emotional and mental well-being.

Curriculum leaders across all subjects and year groups plan learning very effectively. They carefully choose the core knowledge they want pupils to know and remember in the long term. They also identify how best to break down knowledge into manageable chunks. This helps pupils to master complex ideas and concepts. Pupils apply their increasing knowledge to refine and deepen their understanding. They make connections across different subjects and experience the joy of grasping concepts securely.

Teachers take part in high-quality training opportunities. These aid them to strengthen their subject expertise, and ensure that they are highly skilled in teaching the planned curriculum. Importantly, teachers give pupils carefully planned opportunities to revise prior learning. This also helps pupils to remember their learning in the long term. Assessment systems support teachers to check how effectively pupils learn and remember essential knowledge. Teachers use these checks well to address misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning.

Leaders make sure that staff have the knowledge and resources to fully include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils study the full curriculum and flourish with bespoke help from support staff and therapists. Leaders and staff also make sure that pupils who join with lower attainment in reading catch up quickly. This enables these pupils to succeed across the curriculum.

Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviours and exemplary attitudes to learning. This makes a marked contribution to their very successful learning in all subjects.

Pupils across school achieve highly in all subjects. This includes students in the sixth form. All are prepared exceptionally well for leaving school, whether they continue in education or training, or start employment. The vast majority continue their studies at university across a range of disciplines.

Impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance are comprehensive. Pupils across Years 7 to 13 gain experience of the world of work. They learn about the many career pathways available and are helped to make the right choices for them.

The personal development provision is exemplary. It aims to ensure that pupils develop a deep understanding of issues that affect them and society more generally. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to treat all with respect. Staff deliver the school's own specially designed curriculum which aims to support pupils' character development. All subjects arrange enrichment activities, including plentiful visits and visitors. During the week, there are some 70 clubs on offer. All pupils attend at least two a week.

Leaders consult often with staff about school practices and policies. Staff find leaders approachable and considerate. They said that leaders take care of their well-being and take effective steps to reduce their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance. This is supported by ongoing training for staff and clear procedures for reporting concerns. Consequently, leaders quickly identify safeguarding and welfare concerns.

When needed, leaders ensure that pupils get help promptly from the safeguarding and welfare teams, including counsellors. Leaders have well-established links with a range of external agencies. They make referrals without delay when appropriate.

Policies and the curriculum help pupils to understand risk, stay safe and know how to seek help. This includes, for example, concerns related to appropriate and safe behaviour with their peers.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102857
<b>Local authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199304
<b>Type of school</b>	Community
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1364
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	462
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Simon Midlane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Laws
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.valentines-sch.org.uk/">www.valentines-sch.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 October 2006 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is currently not using any alternative education.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, technology, modern foreign languages, physical education, and business and economics. This involved discussions with leaders and teachers, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and students in the sixth form. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair and two other members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with the local authority representative. The inspection team also spoke with the headteacher and deputy headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and other leaders and school staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including records relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff. Inspectors also looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of the 70 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, which included 66 written comments. They also considered the 52 responses to the staff survey and 433 responses to the pupil survey.

## Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Blaney	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hook	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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