

# Inspection of Ilford County High School

Fremantle Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 2JB

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

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

Pupils work hard and achieve well. They enjoy being part of a school where they can celebrate cultural difference. Teachers provide a reasonable range of clubs which pupils can attend outside of lessons.

Teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves. Pupils debate complex topics, including during form time. They enjoy discussing current affairs, such as the situation in Afghanistan.

Pupils are set aspirational academic targets by leaders and have high expectations of themselves. Staff also encourage pupils to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils said that their teachers talk about mental well-being all the time. If pupils have a concern about anything, they can speak to a teacher. Pupils access extra support if they need it.

Bullying does not happen often, but when it is picked up it is dealt with firmly. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous to their teachers and to visitors. However, pupils' levels of motivation can vary in lessons when the curriculum is less demanding than it could be.

Students in the sixth form are well supported with their next steps. Form tutors and sixth-form leaders advise them about university applications. Many students aim to attend Oxbridge and Russell Group universities. Teachers help students to craft their personal statements.

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

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They expect pupils to achieve well. In subjects such as science, mathematics, geography and physical education (PE), the curriculum is well sequenced. Teachers plan opportunities in lessons to revisit previous learning. In science, pupils enjoy frequent practical work. In mathematics, all pupils are taught GCSE further mathematics content in Years 10 and 11.

Across the curriculum, teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and address any misconceptions. This approach is particularly helpful at the current time in finding out what learning pupils need to go over again. Typically, the curriculum is planned and taught to promote deep thinking and discussion among pupils. For example, in history, a pupil sparked debate by asking whether it was possible to be nationalistic about more than one country. Pupils engage well with this approach to learning and, consequently, they behave well in class.

Leaders changed one aspect of the GCSE options process four years ago. Pupils choose one subject from food technology, design and technology, art, music or physical education at the end of Year 8 and study this subject to GCSE at the end of Year 11. This has increased uptake in the arts at key stage 4. However, while curriculum plans in key stage 3 cover the aims of the national curriculum in these

subjects, some aspects of pupils' learning are not as deep and rich. In music, for instance, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to perform or to develop critical engagement with a rich musical repertoire.

Teachers encourage pupils to be independent in their learning. This is particularly the case in the sixth form, where students are required to complete preparation work in advance of lessons. Students appreciate the advice and feedback given by teachers. Pupils in the main school are well versed in reflecting on their own work and discussing it with their peers. This helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and bring about self-improvement.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is strong. Staff use 'pupil passports' to plan for and meet these pupils' needs in class. Subject specialist co-educators support where needed. A small number of SEND pupils read fluently but find comprehension more difficult. These pupils have regular extra support before school. All pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive weekly oracy lessons. These help to develop their confidence in speaking and listening, which leaders have identified as essential for later life.

Pupils follow a well-considered personal development curriculum. This includes teaching about topics such as coercion, mutual tolerance, gender identity and sexual harassment. It also incorporates careers education. The school provides pupils with helpful information about vocational qualifications, training and apprenticeships.

A reasonable range of extra-curricular activities are usually on offer to pupils, but this is not extensive. This was the case before the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders have acknowledged the need to offer more to develop and nurture pupils' talents and interests.

Staff said that leaders show consideration for their well-being. Teachers work with subject hubs and local schools to share ideas and expertise. Leaders take account of staff workload and have taken steps to reduce it.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding team makes appropriate referrals to the local authority. For example, its members have worked with the local 'Prevent' team. Staff receive regular, up-to-date training, covering issues such as peer-on-peer abuse. Staff newsletters provide safeguarding updates during the year. Appropriate recruitment checks are undertaken.

Teachers and pupils know about the safeguarding risks in their area. These include drugs and knife crime. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the local area and online. They are well supported in managing academic pressures and their mental health.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Changes to the key stage 4 options process have led to a greater proportion of pupils studying for GCSEs in subjects such as art and music. However, while the key stage 3 programmes in these subjects broadly meet the aims of the national curriculum, some of pupils' learning in these subjects is not as deep. Leaders must refine the curriculum to address this. For example, in music, pupils need to deepen their understanding through increasingly sophisticated performing, composing and listening work.
- A reasonable range of opportunities are provided for pupils to enjoy experiences above and beyond the academic, but there could be more. Leaders should consider the needs and talents of pupils and offer a greater variety of additional activities that aim to deepen pupils' personal development beyond the academic curriculum.

## 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>	102850
<b>Local authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204490
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1110
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	259
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Melvin Pedro
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Drysdale
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ichs.org.uk/">http://www.ichs.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 2007 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher has changed since the last inspection.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was using one registered alternative provider.
- 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 inspectors 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and spoke to the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, geography, history, mathematics, science and PE. Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in music, design and technology, food technology and philosophy.
- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. Inspectors also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of checks carried out before staff are appointed.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils of all ages, including in the sixth form. They spoke to pupils during lesson visits. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes. The inspection team spoke to staff about pupils' behaviour and about their workload. Thirty-eight staff responses, 217 pupil responses and 124 parent responses to Ofsted surveys were also considered.

## Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Healey-Welch	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andy Webster	Ofsted Inspector

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