

# Inspection of The FitzWimarc School

Hockley Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8EB

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pupils know there are high expectations for their conduct. Where these expectations are not met, staff will challenge pupils and follow up. Generally, pupils are polite and courteous. They are motivated by the school's 'bronze to platinum' reward system. Staff have established positive relationships with pupils. If pupils have a worry, they know student services, or their form tutor, will help.

Older pupils are supportive mentors for younger pupils. There is effective, specific support for mental health and well-being. Pupils have a voice and have established a LGBT club that supports everyone to feel included. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Pupils learn much about how to be tolerant and kind. Despite this, a small minority of pupils still say unkind things. This worries some pupils. Because leaders follow up on pupils' concerns, incidents of bullying are kept to a minimum.

There are a variety of clubs and wider opportunities as well as lots of chances to compete at sport. All pupils are encouraged to be physically active, such as by undertaking a basketball marathon for charity.

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

Leaders have ensured an ambitious curriculum is in place. At key stage 3, pupils now have more time to explore subjects in breadth and depth. This ensures that pupils have a secure foundation for further study. Leaders' curriculum choices have enabled more pupils to study the subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). For example, many pupils study two languages at key stage 3 to prepare them to study languages at GCSE. Leaders have also realised an ambition for more than 50% of pupils to study triple science at GCSE. This combination of factors ensures that there is a strong academic core for the curriculum. In the sixth form, students have a wide range of subject choices. They achieve well in their academic and vocational studies.

Teachers collaboratively plan subject curriculums, giving thought to how knowledge is sequenced. Typically, this has been done well. For example, in English, pupils learn all about the topic of 'monsters'. This provides a secure knowledge base to build on when studying Beowulf or Macbeth. Pupils make strong connections between subjects, such as by learning about the wider historical period of the texts they read. This helps to deepen their understanding. In the sixth form, students make more complex links between the topics they study. Teachers skilfully support students to justify their opinions using specific examples. As a result, there is a clear progression in the depth and complexity of students' knowledge.

In small pockets of the curriculum, decisions about when to assess pupils are not well made. Although teachers typically check what pupils know, they occasionally

use assessments before pupils have covered the range of learning they need to be successful. This means that these assessments have little value for pupils.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and provide clear explanations. They ensure that the work pupils produce is of a high standard. Pupils develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. Those at the earlier stages of reading are appropriately supported to develop their reading fluency. 'Pupil passports' clearly identify the adaptations pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need. Teachers implement these adaptations effectively. This ensures that pupils with SEND are supported to achieve well.

Lessons are mostly disruption free. Pupils are engaged with their learning. Very occasionally, pupils are late and miss out on their learning. Outside lessons, most pupils self-regulate their behaviour. A small minority of pupils cause difficulties for others. Where pupils report this, staff always sort it out.

A wide range of opportunities support pupils' personal development. A well-planned 'skills for life' curriculum ensures that pupils learn about tolerance, accepting difference, and relationships. This is complimented by an effective form time and assembly programme, during which pupils learn about topics such as diversity. Consequently, pupils have a secure understanding of British values.

Careers education, particularly in the sixth form, enables pupils to be well informed about their next steps. Students get the support they need. This includes with applications to universities and vocational pathways.

A range of high-quality, competitive sporting opportunities are offered. These cater for all abilities. Extra-curricular opportunities extend well beyond sport. There is something at the school to cater for most interests. For instance, choir, Lego, and drama are all options.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders consider staff workload and well-being carefully. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities. Governors are further strengthening their skillset by recruiting for additional educational expertise.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are appropriately trained to effectively identify any signs of risk to pupils. Effective processes are in place to manage any allegations.

Leaders maintain safeguarding records well. Records are detailed and show a clear chronology and follow up with external agencies.

Leaders provide training and support for pupils around issues such as sexual harassment. Pupils are confident to report worries to adults.

Governors have ensured that external audits have been undertaken to quality assure leaders' safer recruitment checks. Some minor gaps in record-keeping and process were addressed during the inspection.

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

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

- In small pockets of the curriculum, pupils are sometimes asked to undertake assessments or assignments before they have secured the knowledge they need to be successful. As a result, these assessments or assignments have little value for pupils. Leaders should ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are consistently used meaningfully.
- A small minority of pupils are unkind with their words and actions towards others. This makes some pupils worry and feel uncomfortable. Leaders need to put further strategies in place to ensure that all pupils treat each other with tolerance and respect.

## **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.

## **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>	141841
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241106
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<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>	1785
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	293
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Dudmish
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Harris
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fitzwimarc.com">www.fitzwimarc.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

## Information about this school

- The school is much larger than average and has recently expanded its sixth form.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, physical education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with members of the governing body and leaders of provision for 'skills for life', SEND, behaviour and attendance, sixth form, early careers teachers and their mentors, safeguarding, careers, and personal development.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also visited form time, assembly and after-school time.
- Inspectors visited other subjects and met with leaders in languages, geography, religious education, computing and business studies.
- Inspectors explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 247 responses and 164 free-text responses made by parents to the survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered 91 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 420 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Marc White	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Lawrence	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Georgina Atkinson	Ofsted Inspector

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