

Inspection of Mayflower High School

Stock Road, Billericay, Essex CM12 0RT

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils are happy at Mayflower High School. They meet the high expectations set for them and know that leaders encourage 'success and opportunity for all'.

Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and are accepting of each other. Bullying occasionally happens. When this is the case, staff quickly sort it out. Racist and homophobic language is not tolerated by pupils or staff. Pupils feel well supported due to the pastoral care they receive. Pupils are safe.

Some learning is disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. While this is typically from a small number of pupils, pupils who want to focus on their learning do feel frustrated.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of opportunities to develop their confidence through pupil leadership. Groups such as the executive committee work on school projects. Digital leaders help to educate others about online safety, and the equality and diversity group helps to plan events such as LGBTQ+ history month.

Pupils access a broad curriculum. Where teaching is of high quality, pupils learn well. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). While this is more consistent for students in the sixth form, pupils' experiences in Years 7 to 11 are more variable.

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

Leaders have developed well-designed curriculum plans. They have identified the knowledge they want pupils to know. This includes for students in the sixth form.

Teaching in some areas helps pupils to understand and remember the important information that pupils need to be able to achieve well. However, there are occasions when not all teachers deliver leaders' intended curriculum consistently well. There is variability in how some teachers check what pupils know and in how they use information to support pupils with SEND. Teachers do not routinely make adaptations to ensure pupils remember what they need for their next steps in learning. These inconsistencies are more common in those areas of the curriculum taught by temporary or less experienced teachers.

Most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND are quickly identified. Pupil support plans provide teachers with the information they need to help pupils learn alongside their peers. Where plans are put in place effectively and their learning is planned, putting in place support to help them access the curriculum, pupils with SEND learn well. However, this work is not consistent across all subjects.

A small number of pupils attend the school's dyslexia centre. The unit supports pupils with specific and persistent literacy difficulties. Staff in the unit have expert

knowledge. This expertise is shared through training other staff in, for example, strategies to support reading. Consequently, programmes to help those who struggle to read fluently are effective. Staff encourage pupils to read in subject lessons and in tutor time. Pupils do this enthusiastically and with confidence.

Staff have high expectations for sixth-form students. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to develop and deepen students' understanding. They use effective questioning to challenge students to apply their knowledge to unfamiliar contexts. This helps students to have a secure understanding of the information that they need to remember.

Generally, pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. However, there are occasions where pupils are not as focused as they might be. While the behaviour of pupils is generally managed well, there is a number of pupils who do not meet leaders' expectations for their behaviour. This leads to disruption to learning. This is because staff do not consistently apply the behaviour policy.

While attendance is high in Years 7 to 11, the attendance and punctuality of sixth-form students is low. Leaders' strategies to improve students' attendance have started to bring about some improvement.

Through the personal development curriculum, pupils develop a secure understanding of themselves and the wider world. Pupils are tolerant and accepting of difference and celebrate diversity. A careers programme supports pupils to learn about the next stages of their learning or employment, such as apprenticeships.

The school has been through a very unsettled period of time. This has contributed significantly towards the loss of parental trust and confidence in the school. Leaders have implemented new communication strategies. However, leaders acknowledge that there is further work to do as the school becomes more settled.

Leaders listen to and respond positively to staff's views relating to workload. Committed governors, including some recent appointments, have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide support and challenge through monitoring visits to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors are well trained in safeguarding matters. They understand their responsibilities. They understand the systems that are in place and use them to swiftly report concerns. The safeguarding team works closely with other leaders to spot trends and patterns in pupils' behaviours. This helps leaders to put early intervention in place to help keep pupils safe. Records are well maintained. Leaders respond quickly to concerns and involve external agencies where appropriate.

Thorough recruitment processes are in place to check that staff are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils learn through lessons and assemblies how to keep themselves safe when online and within the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not consistently use assessment strategies or the information they receive about pupils, including those with SEND, well enough to plan precisely the teaching that pupils need. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning that are not addressed. Leaders must take the time and opportunity to ensure that temporary staff understand and implement the agreed systems that are in place. They must also provide effective training to ensure that there is greater consistency in how all teachers use information to plan precisely and adapt their teaching to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, know and remember the important information they need.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers understand and consistently implement the behaviour policy. As a result, not all respond effectively to disruption to learning. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are provided with appropriate training to understand and implement the behaviour policy as leaders intend.
- A number of parents have lost trust and confidence in the school. Leaders have put new systems in place to improve communication with parents to better support parental engagement. Leaders should review the impact of their communication to support the development of improved confidence and engagement of parents.
- Too many students in the sixth form continue to be routinely absent or late to school. This results in these students having gaps in their learning and knowledge. Leaders should continue their work with students and families to improve attendance and punctuality.

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

Unique reference number	137048
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10265608
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	1,707
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Scott Lister
Headteacher	Janet Williams, Interim headteacher
Website	www.mayflowerhigh.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been many changes to staffing and leadership since the previous inspection, including the appointment of an interim headteacher. Currently, there is a significant proportion of temporary teachers and teachers new to the teaching profession.
- An on-site centre for pupils with dyslexia provides specially resourced provision for up to 20 pupils with specific and persistent literacy difficulties.
- The school uses three registered and four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art, history and French. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and students about their experiences of the school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour at breaktimes and in lessons.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with different leaders, including the school's special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors consider a range of documentation related to supporting pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk. The lead inspector scrutinised records relating to safeguarding and how the school engages with external agencies. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body. He also spoke via phone with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team met with leaders in the sixth form, visited sixth-form lessons and spoke with groups of sixth-form students.
- The lead inspector considered the 372 responses and 293 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The lead inspector also reviewed the 84 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the seven responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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