

Inspection of Chelmer Valley High School

Court Road, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7ER

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this school because they have a range of opportunities to succeed. They have the chance to study a wide range of subjects, such as hair and beauty, philosophy, engineering and economics. Pupils do their best, and leaders are always thinking about how to make learning better.

Pupils respect staff and each other. They feel valued because staff build positive relationships with them. Pupils achieve the high expectations that staff set them. This means that most pupils behave well. Bullying is not tolerated. Where there are rare instances of bullying, pupils trust staff to deal with it effectively. Pupils know that discrimination of any form is not accepted in this school. This makes them feel safe and confident to be themselves.

Many pupils participate in the many trips and clubs available. These opportunities help them thrive. For example, in astronomy club, pupils can use the school's observatory to explore space with powerful telescopes. They can also learn about the smallest organisms by attending a trip to the world's largest particle physics laboratory in Switzerland.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, which covers a broad range of subjects. They have thought carefully about what pupils will learn. Teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge and break learning down into smaller steps. This helps pupils to gain access to learning, even when it is challenging.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. In most subjects, teachers regularly check what pupils are learning. Teachers successfully adapt their teaching to provide pupils with the help they need to improve their work and learn more. However, occasionally, in a small number of subjects, adaptations to teaching are less consistent. Where this is the case, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders understand that learning to read is important for pupils to be able to follow the full curriculum effectively. Leaders have developed a range of strategies to support the weakest readers. Leaders encourage pupils to read widely and often. This has helped to reduce the gaps in pupils' knowledge and ensure that pupils who struggle to read learn to do so fluently.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. Teachers use strategies to adapt learning so that pupils can access what is being taught. This means that, in most subjects, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers.

Students learn well in sixth form. They value the high-quality support they receive and the many opportunities that are available to them outside of their lessons. Leaders provide exceptional support to students to help them make decisions on the next stage of their education, training or careers.

Expectations for pupils' behaviour are high. On occasion, when pupils cannot access learning, they are not as engaged as they should be. This leads to some low-level disruption in a minority of subjects. This is seen more frequently in lessons that are covered by supply teachers. Teachers use the behaviour systems effectively to ensure that this is dealt with.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' attendance. This means that fewer pupils are now missing out on their learning.

Leaders ensure that personal development is a priority at this school. Every two weeks a 'Wonky Wednesday' adds an extra lesson to their timetable. In this lesson, pupils take part in a wide range of well-planned activities, where they are taught important life lessons, such as personal finance and how to stay healthy. Leaders track pupils' participation in clubs. They have plans in place to make sure that all pupils can benefit from the activities on offer.

Leaders thoroughly prepare pupils for their future lives. There is extensive guidance on the careers and educational options available to pupils. For example, there is a National Health Service Day, where pupils can take part in high-quality practical activities led by surgeons and nurses.

Leaders at all levels have a desire to continually improve what the school provides. Leaders think carefully about the well-being of their staff. They know their staff well and prioritise staff development. Staff work well together. Leaders have ensured that very recent staffing challenges have not impacted on the pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding so that they can identify pupils who are at risk of harm. Concerns are dealt with swiftly by leaders, who are relentless in ensuring that pupils are well supported. Leaders work well with external agencies so that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need.

Leaders comprehensively check the suitability of adults who work at the school.

Pupils learn about the risks they may face and are taught to keep themselves safe. They know who to talk to if they have a concern about themselves or somebody else.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of the curriculum, teachers do not adapt teaching effectively for some pupils who are struggling to learn. As a result, these pupils cannot access what they are being taught and do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all teachers have the expertise to adapt their teaching to make sure that all pupils learn well.

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	137260
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10268149
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,171
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	159
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gary Twinn
Headteacher	Claire Goodchild
Website	www.chelmervalleyhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides full-time and part-time alternative provision for 16 pupils at six providers, one of which is registered and five of which are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff to explore provision across the school, including curriculum design and provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with two trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, geography, drama and science. For each deep dive, they met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to the staff with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour, and personal development, including careers. They also reviewed a range of documentation in these areas.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 13 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and around the school site.
- Inspectors held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered the 117 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered 113 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Andrew Robinson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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