

# Inspection of Hall Mead School

Marlborough Gardens, Upminster, Essex RM14 1SF

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Maria Ducker. This school is part of Empower Learning Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon London, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Keith Butcher.

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 under section 5 of the Act since February 2013.

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

Pupils are exceptionally proud to be part of the Hall Mead community. They are safe here, and show respect to all. This includes welcoming others and celebrating a range of diverse backgrounds. Pupils know that all staff will respond swiftly and effectively to any concerns. Older pupils are excellent role models for their peers. For example, they volunteer to support Year 7 pupils with their reading and arrange an afternoon tea for older members of the local community. Prefects support events and act as ambassadors for the school.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow a broad and highly ambitious curriculum. They enjoy their lessons and show consistently positive attitudes to their learning. Staff know their pupils well and provide multiple opportunities for them to revisit their prior learning. As a result, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

A 'freshers fair' encourages all pupils to take part in a rich range of activities throughout their time at the school. These are well matched to the school values and include a highly popular group celebrating the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. A range of local visits and visitors to the school enhance the broad curriculum, such as a survivor of the Holocaust sharing their story.

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

The curriculum is highly ambitious. It aligns with, and frequently exceeds, what is expected nationally. In each subject, leaders have carefully identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. Effective sequencing ensures pupils build on their understanding to tackle more complex ideas. For example, in history, pupils develop their knowledge of power when looking at the relationship between the Medieval Church and King. They explore this concept in more depth when analysing the British Empire and, later, how dictatorships were formed.

Teachers benefit from a range of subject-specific training, including all being part of a relevant subject association. As a result, they are experts in their subject and present information clearly. They routinely check pupils' understanding and are well placed to address any misconceptions. Pupils produce high-quality work in a broad range of subjects.

Pupils with SEND thrive and are included in all aspects of school life. Dedicated and well-trained staff swiftly identify any needs. This ensures appropriate support is immediately put in place. Effective personalised provision allows all pupils with SEND to follow a broad curriculum, in line with their peers. Support is reviewed regularly, and parents and carers play a key role in this.

Leaders prioritise supporting all pupils to read widely. For example, pupils read routinely in form time and spend time in the school library. All staff are trained to be teachers of reading. Pupils needing additional help with their reading benefit from

extra support, including in phonics. As a result, these pupils swiftly develop their accuracy, fluency and confidence.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils have a clear understanding of the 'discipline with dignity' approach, which fosters strong relationships with staff. Pupils are calm and orderly both in and outside of the classroom. They encourage each other to self-regulate and take pleasure in other pupils' achievements. Leaders intervene swiftly in the rare instances when pupils need support to meet leaders' high expectations, including around attendance.

Subject specialists deliver a well-sequenced personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. Pupils learn about important issues such as the dangers associated with drugs, alcohol and smoking. A programme of external speakers encourages pupils to stay safe, for example giving a recent assembly on knife crime. Leaders provide extensive resources to support positive mental health, including psychotherapy, emotional literacy support and mentoring. All pupils, including those with SEND, are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. An extensive careers programme offers work experience and links with a vast range of both employers and education providers.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They know that leaders have taken multiple steps to help manage workload and to enhance staff's well-being. Highly knowledgeable governors and trustees match the exceptionally high expectations that leaders have for all pupils. The trust ensures that staff at all levels benefit from various opportunities for professional development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137197
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	10293273
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,071
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Keith Butcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maria Ducker
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hallmeadschool.com">www.hallmeadschool.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 February 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school has a specialist SEND resource base for 23 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors met with members of the trust and the governing body and a representative from the Empower Learning Academy Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, history, physical education and geography. They met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The curriculum in other subjects was considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff through both discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Hannah Glossop, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Blaney	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector

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