

Inspection of Barking Abbey School, A Specialist Sports and Humanities College

Sandringham Road, Barking, Essex IG11 9AG

Inspection dates: 31 January and 1 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a large and diverse school where difference is valued. Pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to their education. This is because leaders have set high expectations, which reflect the school motto 'give and expect the best'.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are exceptionally well supported. Staff know pupils well and ensure they all have access to the same opportunities. As a result, pupils achieve well and are fully prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Teachers encourage pupils, and students in the sixth form, to engage in debate and discussion. Pupils are respectful and listen to opposing viewpoints. Sixth-form students benefit from the wide range of A-level and vocational courses on offer. They are encouraged to take on leadership responsibility and to act as role models.

Pupils' conduct is exemplary, both inside lessons and around the school. Leaders have established simple and clear rules that everyone understands. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted due to poor behaviour. Teachers build strong relationships with pupils, which allows them to thrive and enjoy their lessons. Pupils report no concerns about bullying and know that any issues will be dealt with swiftly by staff. This helps to ensure that pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school.

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

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum content they want pupils to know and remember and the order in which it is taught. This helps teachers to routinely draw on pupils' previous learning when tackling new ideas. For example, in English, pupils in Year 8 explore the concept of the tragic hero and then apply this knowledge to their study of Macbeth at the start of Year 10. In mathematics, learning builds and progresses from previous topics. For example, pupils can attempt quadratic inequalities in key stage 4 because they have previously studied how to solve quadratic equations graphically and algebraically in key stage 3.

Leaders have considered the local context and pupils' starting points when designing the curriculum. In religious education, for example, pupils look at the commonalities between religions with a focus on developing tolerance and understanding. This gives pupils, and students in the sixth form, confidence in debating ethical issues in relation to their understanding of faith.

Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subjects that they deliver. They use a range of effective strategies to check pupils' learning and identify any gaps in their knowledge. They are swift to address any misconceptions in pupils' understanding so that pupils are ready to move on in their learning. Pupils' work is consistently of high quality.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, including those who attend the specially resourced provisions, receive the support they need. This starts with accurate and swift identification of pupils' needs and starting points. Staff are well trained and supported to ensure pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers wherever possible. Staff identify at an early stage any pupils that struggle with reading. These pupils are supported to catch up quickly, including those who need help with phonics.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are supportive and respectful of each other. Routines and expectations are in place which lead to a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils are focused, engaged and participate well in lessons. Attendance is high and systems for improving this further are well-established. There is a strong emphasis on the development of positive character habits and pupils are rewarded when they demonstrate these. For example, anti-bullying ambassadors in each year group help to ensure the school is an environment in which pupils feel safe.

Leaders promote pupils' wider development through a rich set of experiences. This includes opportunities for involvement in the school production, chess, poetry, school newspaper, robotics and debating clubs. The school runs four sports academies, which provides for students with talent in one of basketball, dance, football or netball. This includes expert coaching, personalised training and high-quality competition alongside a programme of academic study.

Leaders have developed a very strong personalised careers programme that includes meaningful work experience. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are encouraged to develop as responsible, active citizens. For example, by joining the junior leadership team, pupils can take part in charity fundraising, volunteering in the school food bank and recycling and tree-planting projects.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have high ambition for their pupils and want the best for them. Staff, pupils and parents share this ambition. Staff feel that their workload and well-being has been carefully considered by leaders. They appreciate their open-door policy. Knowledgeable governors provide highly effective challenge and support to school leaders through regular monitoring visits.

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

Unique reference number	101241
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10296586
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
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	2,325
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	505
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Hemmings
Headteacher	Tony Roe
Website	www.barkingabbeyschool.co.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average secondary school operating from two sites approximately one mile apart. The Longbridge Campus is based at Longbridge Road, IG11 8UF and the Sandringham Campus is based at Sandringham Road, IG11 9AG.
- The sixth-form provision is located at the Sandringham Road site.
- The school provides specially resourced provision for 29 pupils with autism on the Sandringham Road site, and a separate provision for 18 pupils with complex moderate learning difficulties on the Longbridge Road site. All pupils attending these provisions have an education, health and care plan.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative providers.
- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, business studies and religious education. To do this, they met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, had discussions with staff and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. They also held discussions with a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Robert Grice, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Katerina Christodoulou	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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