

Inspection of a good school: The Royal Liberty School

Upper Brentwood Road, Romford, Essex RM2 6HJ

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Lee Raftery. This school is part of Success For All Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Ward, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Neil Yeomans.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud to attend the school. They appreciate the care and commitment of staff. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to develop their talents and interests. They can attend the very large number of extra-curricular clubs and participate in inter-college competitions. The school makes available many student leadership roles.

Staff know their pupils very well, and as a result, pupils are happy and safe. They behave exceptionally well in class and around school. Pupils are polite, respectful and mature and value diversity and equality. They understand the importance of coming to school, and as a result, attendance is very high for all pupils.

Leaders at all levels work tirelessly to achieve their vision of the school being a place where pupils can succeed. They have exceptionally high expectations of all pupils, which are realised through the broad and ambitious curriculum. The vast majority of pupils take the English Baccalaureate suite of qualifications to provide them with wide choices for their future. Many take triple science at GCSE.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many commented on how much their son enjoys school.

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

Leaders have improved the school's curriculum significantly in recent years. They have carefully identified the key knowledge that pupils must learn and how they should learn it across the curriculum. For example, in computing, pupils develop their coding skills from microbit programming to using pseudocode. They move on to more challenging concepts, such as arrays, in Years 10 and 11. Leaders have also carefully considered the important vocabulary pupils must learn and remember. For instance, in history, pupils in Year 7 were able to talk about the 'excommunication' of Henry II. Pupils in Year 9 discussed the 'ghettoisation' of Jews in Nazi Germany.

The school's 'Eight Teaching Consistencies' ensure high-quality teaching. Teachers are passionate experts in their subjects. Their strong subject knowledge enables them to present subject content clearly to pupils. Teachers check and address any misconceptions in pupils' understanding very carefully. This helps pupils to deepen their subject-specific knowledge and skills over time. For example, in science, pupils in Year 9 were able to talk confidently about ionic bonding, diffusion and osmosis.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve very well. Teachers know pupils' individual needs well and adjust their teaching skilfully. Reading is a big priority at the school. The school supports those in the early stages of reading effectively. Staff ensure that pupils continue to read regularly both inside and outside lessons. They encourage pupils to read a wide variety of books, including a target of reading 50 key books by the age of 16.

The school has very high expectations of pupils' conduct and behaviour, which pupils rise to. There is almost no low-level disruption in lessons. The school provides a very high level of pastoral care for pupils, for example through the use of heads of year, the home-school support worker and the school counsellor. Leaders address pupil absence in a caring and robust way. They have a clear oversight of attendance so that pupils come to school regularly.

Leaders' work to develop pupils' personal development is exceptional, extensive and inclusive. The school's 'cultural capital pledge' ensures that all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, benefit from the many opportunities the school provides. The student leadership group comprises many pupils. It has brought about improvements, including the establishment of new extra-curricular clubs, such as one for chess.

Pupils can become ambassadors in many areas, including health, science and anti-bullying. Many pupils become sports leaders. Extra-curricular events in science include visits from a mobile zoo and mobile aquarium, a 'CSI day' and a regular robotics club.

Staff value the opportunities for professional development. They greatly appreciate leaders' care for their well-being and their efforts to reduce workload. Staff participate in collaborative cross-trust training groups. Trust leaders and governors know the school well and are committed to its further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, The Royal Liberty School, to be good in May 2013.

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	143877
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10313902
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	749
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Yeomans
CEO of trust	Paul Ward
Headteacher	Lee Raftery
Website	www.royalliberty.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Success For All Educational Trust.
- The school uses eight 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.
- inspectors met with members of the school's senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in computing, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The inspectors met with those responsible for governance, including the chair and vice-chair of the local committee, and spoke with the CEO of the trust.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Christian Hicks, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Robert Grice

His Majesty's Inspector

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