

# Inspection of The Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls

Brentwood Road, Romford, Essex RM1 2RR

---

Inspection dates:	19 and 20 November 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Emilie Darabasz. The school is part of LIFE Education 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), Julian Dutnall, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Louise Douglas. There is also an executive headteacher, David Turrell, who has responsibility for this school and one other.

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

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, feel genuinely cared for in this friendly, welcoming school. Pupils feel happy and safe. They know that trusted adults will act swiftly to help them if they have any worries. Pupils are encouraged to take full advantage of the opportunities available to develop their character and expand their horizons. They are rightly proud of the distinctive history and ethos of the school with its focus on female empowerment.

Staff have very high expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Pupils feel a real sense of belonging in the school. Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence and self-belief. Most pupils achieve well in a range of subjects and are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

The 'K-RACERS' values (knowledgeable, resilient, articulate, creative, empathetic, reflective and studious) underpin the school's work in developing pupils' character. Pupils strive to live up to the school's values because these are meaningful to them. They show high levels of respect for staff and for each other. Pupils readily take on positions of responsibility, for example, when they volunteer to take care of animals in the school farm or assist with the school railway.

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

The curriculum is highly ambitious. The school has thought carefully about the curriculum content and the order in which it is taught. It is clear about what it wants pupils to know and remember. The curriculum is designed to build on knowledge progressively over time. Pupils frequently revisit prior learning, helping them to remember important knowledge. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are highly proficient in recalling what they have previously learned.

In many subjects, teaching successfully builds on what pupils have already learned. This makes it easier for pupils to understand new concepts, strengthening their overall knowledge. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils' understanding is not consistently checked, so misconceptions are sometimes missed and not fully addressed. This slows progression through the curriculum for some pupils and their ability to connect new learning to what they have learned before. The school has correctly identified this as a priority for further development.

Staff identify pupils with SEND accurately and detailed plans are put in place to support pupils' learning. Teachers understand the specific needs of their pupils and are well trained to adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils successfully access the full curriculum. The school promotes a love of reading across all subjects. Each teacher plays a key role in building pupils' confidence in reading and speaking. Pupils who struggle with reading are identified and given focused support. For example, form tutors have been trained in how to deliver very effective weekly reading sessions, which help to expand pupils' knowledge and cultural awareness.

Staff have created a culture where pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils participate fully in lessons. Staff regularly praise and reward pupils who show positive attitudes. Behaviour across the school is excellent. The sixth-form building is a calm environment in which students can focus on their studies. Leaders have developed a clear and simple behaviour policy that is well understood and consistently implemented. Pupils maintain high levels of attendance. Those who initially struggle to attend regularly show improvement over time due to the dedicated care and support they receive.

The school's personal, social, health, and economic education programme is thoughtfully structured to support pupils' understanding of key life skills, including fundamental British values, and pupils' wider development. The focus on the personal development of pupils is a considerable strength of the school. For example, all pupils are given regular access to the school's 'Appleby Gallery', where they can view the work of local artists as well as that of fellow pupils. Pupils can choose from a high-quality range of enrichment opportunities, such as choir, dance, debating and cooking.

There is a comprehensive careers programme that starts from Year 7, which provides advice and guidance about different pathways. Students in the sixth form receive regular 'Future Ready' sessions that support them in making informed choices about how to achieve their aspirations. An active student leadership team act as ambassadors for the school and as mentors for younger pupils.

Staff are well informed about appropriate safeguarding procedures, and systems for reporting concerns are well understood. Pupils learn about physical and online safety. Staff's professional development is a high priority. Staff speak very positively about the leadership of the school. Parents and carers are equally positive about their children's experiences at this school. Knowledgeable governors, supported by the trust, provide highly effective challenge and support to school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There are some inconsistencies in a small number of subjects in the way that assessment is used to check what pupils understand. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects because misconceptions are not always consistently identified and addressed. The school should ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding is routinely checked before new content is introduced.

## 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>	138326
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345941
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1408
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	223
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Louise Douglas
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Julian Dutnall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emilie Darabasz
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fbaok.co.uk">http://www.fbaok.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of LIFE Education Trust.
- The school makes use of two registered and six unregistered 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. 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 also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- 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 held meetings with staff and with pupils. Behaviour was observed both in lessons and around the school. The views of pupils, parents, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the local governing body, as well as with representatives of the board of trustees.

## Inspection team

Robert Grice, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gareth Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Poddington	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Smith	His Majesty's Inspector
Paula Ledger	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024