

# Inspection of a good school: Barking Abbey School, A Specialist Sports and Humanities College

Sandringham Road, Barking, Essex IG11 9AG

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2022

## **Outcome**

Barking Abbey School, A Specialist Sports and Humanities College, continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

Pupils across both sites are happy and safe at Barking Abbey School. Students new to the sixth form commented on how welcoming, inclusive and diverse the community is. All enjoy celebrating the variety of cultures and backgrounds. The student council takes an active role in leading change at the school. Examples of this include organising culture week, making changes to uniform and helping the school become more sustainable by introducing light sensors and recycling bins.

Leaders have set high expectations for all pupils by establishing the 'best habits' framework for learning and character. Pupils are motivated to work hard and enjoy positive working relationships with staff. Pupils and students in the sixth form are very ambitious for their futures. They are keen to explore a wide range of opportunities provided through the extensive careers programme.

In lessons, pupils behave sensibly and responsibly. This means that they focus on their learning. Pupils are confident, keen to participate and contribute their ideas readily. They habitually explain, expand on and justify their opinions and enjoy experimenting with sophisticated vocabulary. Pupils learn and achieve very well.

Bullying is rare, but when it does happen pupils are confident that teachers deal with it effectively.

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow a curriculum that matches the breadth and ambition of what is expected nationally. In each

subject, leaders have identified with precision what pupils will learn. This knowledge is well sequenced so that pupils revisit and embed important concepts before moving on to more-challenging ideas. For example, in history, pupils learn about the complexities of cause and effect. They apply their knowledge across different time periods, such as when studying the Norman invasion, the reign of Henry VIII or migration. This enables pupils to identify and debate more-complex issues of causation when they go on to study history at GCSE and A Level.

Teachers have consistently strong knowledge of the subjects they teach. They present information clearly and routinely check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. This ensures that any errors or misconceptions are swiftly identified and corrected. As a result, pupils produce work of high quality and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils with SEND are swiftly and accurately identified. Staff have been comprehensively trained to make appropriate adaptations to learning activities where needed. Therefore, these pupils access the same curriculum as their peers and are well supported to learn and remember more.

Those who need additional help with their reading are also swiftly identified. Specialist staff work with these pupils to practise and develop their reading fluency. This means that pupils are well prepared to read the wide range of classic and contemporary texts studied through the English curriculum.

Pupils behave well and instances of low-level disruption are rare. Pupils move around the building in a calm and orderly manner and behave sensibly at break and lunchtimes. This is because leaders have set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The strong focus on rewards and restorative practices promotes positive professional relationships between pupils and staff.

The provision to promote pupils' wider development is a strength. A well-constructed curriculum teaches pupils about a range of important issues, such as healthy relationships, consent, and personal safety. Pupils are supported to respect different cultures, including through celebrating Black History Month and 'cultures and differences day'.

There is an extensive and widely attended extra-curricular programme. The programme is planned out carefully, with the aim of developing and extending pupils' talents and interests in areas such as sport, chess, debating and robotics. Pupils' experience is further enriched through activities such as drama productions, as well as outings designed to broaden pupils' cultural knowledge. For example, pupils from the specialist SEND provision spoke enthusiastically about the museums that they have visited. Similarly, A-level English literature students enjoy being able to see the plays that they are studying performed at the theatre.

Pupils feel well supported by their teachers. They talked enthusiastically about their own 'best habits' and how they are supported to develop their character and leadership skills.

For example, in the sixth form, students can become members of the school council or reading buddies. Younger pupils can join the junior leadership team.

Leaders prioritise aspiration and ambition. They have established a comprehensive careers programme spanning from Years 7 to 13. All pupils receive impartial advice and are supported to be successful in whatever pathway they choose. Sixth-form students are encouraged and supported to explore the careers and degrees of their choice.

Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Teachers feel listened to and well supported. The governing body is dedicated, knowledgeable and very ambitious for the school. It consistently offers appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is prioritised across the school. It is led by an experienced team who are relentless in identifying those who may be at risk and ensuring that they get the help that they need.

Leaders provide up-to-date training for staff that is both thorough and extensive. This ensures that staff understand what to look out for and how to report concerns. There are robust processes in place to monitor those pupils at risk and seek advice from appropriate agencies when needed.

Governors maintain close oversight of safeguarding. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.

## **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 school to be good in September 2012.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101241
<b>Local authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240099
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2,316
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	514
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Chris Hemmings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tony Roe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.barkingabbeyschool.co.uk/">http://www.barkingabbeyschool.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2020.
- The school is a larger-than-average secondary school operating from two sites approximately a mile apart.
- The sixth-form provision is located at the Sandringham Road site.
- There are two specialist provisions on site for pupils with SEND. All pupils attending these provisions have an education, health and care plan.
- The school makes use of the local authority registered pupil referral unit as an alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in these subjects: English, history, computing and physical 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 the school improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records, and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's surveys.

## Inspection team

Una Buckley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Morris

Ofsted Inspector

Jeff Cole

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Hook

Ofsted Inspector

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