

Inspection of Jo Richardson Community School

Gale Street, Castle Green, Dagenham, Essex RM9 4UN

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 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?

The work done by this school in supporting pupils to develop into successful young adults is exceptional.

The school forges strong partnerships with its local community to enrich pupils' wider experiences. Staff's highly positive working relationships with pupils also strongly support pupils' academic and personal development, and their attitudes towards learning. Staff know and care for pupils really well.

Pupils achieve extremely well, including in external assessments. Leaders have thought very carefully about how to develop a curriculum that will best enable pupils to thrive, both at school and in adulthood. When pupils experience challenges in meeting the high standards expected by the school, leaders support them with sensitivity and diligence. Pupils who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also get the support needed to learn very well. Parents and carers described how their children's aspirations and needs are supported because the school works with them as a 'team'.

The school gives pupils a voice in their education, and their opinions are highly valued. They relish the chance to demonstrate the 'ACHIEVE' values and to work towards receiving a 'Seagull' award. There are plentiful after-school activities for pupils to enjoy and to develop different interests. These are well attended.

Behaviour in class is very positive. Pupils work collaboratively in lessons to get the most out of learning. The school is a calm and productive environment. Pupils are kept safe.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about how to develop a broad, rich and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils. The curriculum is based on the national curriculum and, in some subjects, goes above and beyond what is expected. A key thread in leaders' curriculum thinking is getting pupils ready to flourish in life after school. For example, in planning the curriculum, the school looks at future local and national employment opportunities, and how the knowledge that pupils learn could help them to succeed in these careers.

Through the extensive personal development programme, pupils are also well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about and are given helpful information on the next stages in their education or training. Examples of this include independent advice at appropriate points and numerous opportunities to meet future employers and training providers. Pupils are also taught to understand fundamental British values, and how to live these out in their behaviour and attitudes.

Subject leadership, working closely with teachers within each department, has thought very carefully about the knowledge and skills that pupils need to develop and how this learning will be sequenced. This includes being clear about what pupils should have learned at each stage and how this should be checked. For instance, in history, teaching uses low-stakes questioning to find out what pupils can remember from previous lessons and to address any gaps in learning. Across subjects and year groups, teachers know their pupils well. They adapt the work set to enable pupils to be very successful in learning and remembering more over time.

Leaders have put reading and language development at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils are routinely expected to use subject terminology accurately, such as when explaining the curriculum content that is being studied. For example, in Year 13, students used and explained the term polarisation when considering the rise of Mussolini. Similarly, in Year 8, pupils learning about female representation used and explained terms such as feminism with accuracy. Those who are at their earliest stages of reading, and pupils who need to catch up, are supported to become confident and fluent readers. This is because the school provides these pupils with well-planned additional reading sessions and targeted extra help from adults.

Pupils with SEND are quickly identified when they join the school and are then very well supported. All staff receive effective training to deliver any additional help that these pupils need to learn confidently in a subject. For example, in order to extend staff's expertise, training is delivered both through subject departments and at a whole-school level. Staff are very appreciative of this approach to their professional development.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy learning and they support each other in class. The attendance of pupils is strong, and the school is rightly taking effective steps to secure further improvements to this.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, spoke about how much they appreciate the wider enrichment offer. Examples of this offer include the many opportunities that pupils have to become leaders within the school community and beyond. The school also fosters' pupils' enthusiasm for exploring their interests. This is well demonstrated by the high uptake of extra-curricular activities. The school makes sure that all pupils are able to take part in the wider curriculum offer, for example by identifying and, where possible, reducing any financial barriers to participation.

Leaders use evidence from expert research to inform any changes that they make, and staff appreciate this care. They said that leaders are considerate of well-being.

The governing body supports school leaders very well. It helps them to identify and focus on making sure all pupils are equally well supported in their academic and personal development. For instance, the school is currently modifying the curriculum as part of its aim to increase the uptake of the English Baccalaureate at GCSE.

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	133561
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10296632
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,682
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patricia Harvey
Headteacher	Lisa Keane
Website	http://jorichardson.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- The school currently makes use of seven registered alternative provisions.
- The school has an additionally resourced provision for pupils with autism. There are currently 26 pupils on roll at this provision.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the school leadership team. They also met with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: drama, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious studies. 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. This included some students in the sixth form.
- 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 spoke to pupils during lesson visits. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspection team also spoke to staff about behaviour and about their workload in the school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Luke Stubbles, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gareth Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector
Jennifer Bax	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Poddington	Ofsted Inspector

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