

Mayflower High School

Stock Road, Billericay, Essex CM12 0RT

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher has focused his leadership team and staff on maintaining the school's excellent culture and ethos, and on improving further the quality of teaching. As a result, the school has achieved increasingly high standards.
- Teaching is outstanding because it consistently provides the pupils with the opportunity to learn new knowledge and to develop their understanding in a calm and scholarly environment.
- Through hard work, very good subject knowledge and a determination to do their very best, the staff really do go 'the extra mile' to support the pupils to achieve their potential.
- The curriculum provides a good breadth of subjects and opportunities that enable the pupils to learn about the most important aspects of our cultural heritage. It supports very well the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Year 7 pupils come to Mayflower, following a thorough and effective induction programme, full of enthusiasm and with a desire to learn. This desire continues to burn bright as they develop into knowledgeable, articulate and caring young people over their time at the school.
- Outcomes for the pupils are high and the progress made between Years 7 and 11 is outstanding. This is true for all groups of pupils, including the most able, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils who have special educational needs. This level of progress is achieved through highly effective teaching, excellent academic and pastoral support and the pupils' own diligence.
- The school's sixth form provides a good range of academic and vocational subjects. The learners make good progress from their starting points. They are well supported by tutors and mentors who provide excellent information, advice and guidance about the pathways into future education and careers. As a consequence, the learners are successful in securing high-quality apprenticeships and university places that are right for them.
- The governing body provides the right combination of challenge and support to the headteacher and the rest of the school's leadership. Governors ensure that the school keeps a sharp focus on meeting the challenges it faces in maintaining the high quality of education provided while still balancing its budget.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the good performance of the sixth form, with a particular focus on A/A2 English, mathematics, history and chemistry, so that it matches the outstanding achievement in the rest of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has demonstrated excellent leadership in identifying and driving forward the key areas of the school's work that have raised pupils' achievement successfully. He has set high standards for the teachers and his senior team, and tackled any complacency in the school. The headteacher commands respect from pupils as they recognise that he leads a team of staff who are doing their very best for the school community.
- The school's culture and ethos is one of aspiration and hard work. The headteacher, other senior leaders and teachers have ensured that the school's high expectations for the wearing of uniform, presentation of work and conduct in lessons and around the school are well known and that pupils meet them.
- The headteacher delegates responsibility for key aspects of the school's work to able senior leaders and they, in turn, lead and coordinate the work of teams of staff very well. The monitoring of pupil progress, for example, is thorough, highly effective and involves senior, pastoral and subject leaders to identify when pupils' outcomes are slipping behind. The subsequent support for groups and for individuals is focused sharply on the pupils' needs. This work has real impact, as evidenced by the outstanding progress made by all groups of pupils.
- The vast majority of staff have a clear understanding of the school's aims, feel highly motivated and are proud to work at Mayflower High School. There are ample opportunities for the continuing professional development of staff and many respond positively to these by, for example, leading on curriculum areas or taking on responsibilities for the wide variety of school trips and visits.
- The school plays a full part in local teacher training partnerships and in turn benefits from this by regularly attracting enthusiastic newly qualified teachers, who also carried out part of their training at Mayflower. These new teachers are very well supported by established members of staff who act as their mentors. Induction of new teachers, both into the school and into the local teaching community, is comprehensive and useful in supporting the transition from trainee to qualified teacher. The school's newly qualified teachers have fully immersed themselves into school life, for example by leading on the school's partnership work with other schools for National Science Week. The well-organised and supportive start to their careers at Mayflower has convinced these new teachers that they have made the right choice of profession.
- Performance management of staff is based on a range of factors, and training is well targeted through the comprehensive system of professional development reviews; the consistency of teaching across the school is testament to the impact of this work. However, a sizeable minority who responded to the staff questionnaire felt that the school does not create a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils.
- The school has developed a curriculum that provides a wide range of subjects that enable pupils to learn about our cultural heritage. These subjects, coupled with the school's approach to personal, social, health and economic education through the weekly, well-delivered 'Lifeskills' sessions, provide the landscape for the pupils to learn about life in Britain, how it functions as a modern, democratic country and its place in the wider world. The pupils' learning is further underpinned by the many opportunities to visit places of interest, including other European countries and places of worship, and to participate in music and drama productions, like the recent performances of 'We will rock you'. As a result, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum builds well upon the pupils' experiences at primary school, with a solid grounding in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and it extends these experiences by offering wider opportunities to learn, for example, Spanish as well as French. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is thoughtfully constructed to provide three alternative pathways for pupils, all of which have a sharp focus on the core subjects but provide different amounts of time for their study, depending on the needs of the individual pupil. The curriculum pathways also allow for different opportunities to study vocational and technical subjects. The excellent advice and guidance provided to the pupils over which pathway to choose is built around the school's sound knowledge of the individual. Specific careers and guidance interviews are offered to pupils from Year 9 onwards, and while the school does not organise work placements for Key Stage 4 pupils, its links with local businesses, large and small, identify very good opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge of working life and what they need to do to pursue their aspirations.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body has a clear strategic vision for the school to provide an excellent education that secures high-quality outcomes in academic and vocational qualifications, as well as for the personal development of pupils. Ensuring that the pupils are well set up for their next stage of education, training or employment is also a key focus for governors.
 - Governors provide good challenge and support to the headteacher and the rest of the school's leadership to ensure that their strategic vision is realised. This is demonstrated through the robust way they performance manage the headteacher and review the outcomes of the continuing professional development and pay progression of staff. It is also shown in the way they have worked closely with the headteacher on the strategy to ensure that the school can balance its budget over the next few years.
 - The governors' oversight of the prudent use of resources has also been demonstrated by their focus on the use of pupil premium funding, which is additional funding given to schools for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals. The governors' plans for the deployment of these funds have become successively more sophisticated over the last few years and are now targeted on the key challenges facing disadvantaged pupils in the school. The lower attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils, for example, have been a focus this year. While the plans are sensible, governors have not yet asked for sufficient information to evaluate the impact of this work regarding up-to-date attendance and persistent absence information for pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The governors have ensured that statutory requirements are met and that appropriate people are trained to undertake the oversight of this crucial area of the school's work. Responsible staff in the school do a good job in this area in ensuring that, for example, referrals are followed up appropriately. In a wider sense, the safety of the pupils is supported by the presence of teachers around the school site and the friendly and open atmosphere of the school in its day-to-day operations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The teaching at Mayflower consistently provides the pupils with opportunities to learn new knowledge, develop their understanding and apply new skills in a structured way. This is because lessons and schemes of work are well planned and resources, including a reasonable range of useful textbooks, are used effectively.
- Lessons start on time because pupils move around the school efficiently and arrive promptly to their classes, ready to learn with the right books and equipment. It is made clear to pupils what teachers will and will not accept in terms of behaviour in lessons. The 'infringement card' system, which picks up on pupils' misdemeanours, works well because teachers apply the rules consistently and the pupils do not want to receive an entry onto their personal cards. These simple things all contribute successfully to the calm learning environment which typifies lessons at Mayflower.
- The teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to explain ideas and concepts to pupils clearly and succinctly. Pupils listen well and enjoy the opportunities to discuss issues following the teacher's input, which enables the pupils to frame their arguments and points of view, underpinned by their new background knowledge. Teachers are fully aware of the capabilities of their pupils, and in most lessons more is expected from the most able in terms of the depth of their discussions and responses; they are challenged by teachers if these do not pass muster.
- Teachers use questions very effectively to probe the pupils' understanding, and pupils are happy to offer their responses, safe in the knowledge that even when they struggle, their classmates will listen and support them. There is no hint in lessons that pupils are considered out of the ordinary by their peers, for example if they are an extrovert, an introvert, highly able or if they struggle academically. This helps to create an encouraging, supportive atmosphere for learning.
- Teachers set homework which extends learning or prepares pupils well for work to come. Pupils and parents generally like the organisation of homework through the web-based system which allows them to check what needs to be done and by when. However, a number of pupils reported that if teachers miss the allocated homework slot, they will often subsequently post the tasks on the system, which can then make it difficult for pupils to manage their workload.
- The school recognises that pupils need regular time set aside for reading to encourage them that it is a worthwhile, enjoyable activity. They achieve this successfully by insisting that all pupils bring their current

reading book into school every day so they are prepared for the sessions in normal lessons when, as directed by the senior team on a random basis across the school, everyone is expected to read in class, in silence.

- Pupils are also trusted to take home their class readers in the knowledge that the books will return in good condition. This demonstrates the confidence placed in the pupils by the school as well as the importance placed on reading as an essential life skill. However, at Key Stage 3, more could be done in lessons to promote wider literacy knowledge and understanding by focusing more tightly on the use of grammatical terminology to build upon the knowledge the pupils come with from their primary schools.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding.
- Mayflower pupils grow to be independent, articulate young people, who are able to voice their concerns and discuss issues confidently. They enjoy school and are appreciative of the efforts their teachers go to in order to provide them with a high standard of education. They generally feel challenged by the work they are given and respond to that challenge very well.
- The pupils are supportive of each other and welcoming to new pupils joining the school. They feel that teachers listen to them formally in lessons and at the School Council, as well as informally when they are experiencing difficulties with their work or when having personal problems. The vast majority of pupils feel they have an adult at school to whom they can turn if they are experiencing difficulties, or just want to talk.
- The provision made by the school to teach pupils about keeping safe is very effective, and nearly all pupils agree that they feel safe at Mayflower. According to the pupils, bullying is rare, although a few pupils feel that teachers are not good at resolving any incidents that do occur. The school's work through the 'Lifeskills' programme is effective in raising important issues for discussion about those who are different because of, for example, their physical disabilities or their sexuality. The vast majority of pupils feel positively that the school encourages them to respect people from all backgrounds and to treat all people equally. The use of derogatory language by pupils is exceptionally rare.
- Most pupils feel that the school helps them to know how to live healthy lives through the 'Lifeskills' programme and, for example, in science, physical education and food technology lessons. The school canteen offers a varied menu across the week which helps to support the efforts made in the curriculum to encourage healthy eating. Pupils are patient and good-natured about the long queues, and the food is worth waiting for!
- Tutor times and assemblies are used well to help prepare pupils for the day ahead and to further engender a sense of belonging to the school community through, for example, discussions about the 'thought for the week'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils at Mayflower is outstanding.
- Year 7 pupils start at the school full of enthusiasm and eager to learn. This positivity continues with them throughout their time at the school and is clearly demonstrated by their excellent attitudes and readiness to learn in lessons.
- A large majority feel that other pupils behave well most of the time in lessons and around the school. The pupils have very high expectations of each other: teachers and the inspection team felt that behaviour in lessons is nearly always exemplary and that occasional low-level disruption is invariably eliminated through a quiet word from the teacher.
- Considering the large number of pupils at the school every day, very little, if any, litter is seen on the school site. Where there is any, teachers encourage pupils to pick it up in support of the hardworking site staff; the pupils invariably respond positively to these requests.
- Pupils' overall attendance is good. Attendance has been below average for disadvantaged pupils, and their persistent absence rates were higher than average. However, the school's focus in this area by using pupil premium funding has seen attendance and persistent absence rates for this group improve this year.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- The school has, year on year, consistently improved standards since the previous inspection in January 2012. The pupils' academic and vocational outcomes are now high and the progress made by pupils between Years 7 and 11 is outstanding, as evidenced by historical published examinations data, the school's own performance information for current pupils, and their work in lessons, books and folders.
- Most year groups join Mayflower High School with above-average attainment in English and mathematics from Key Stage 2. The well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum and the consistently high-quality teaching ensure that pupils build quickly and solidly upon their previous attainment.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have made increasingly better progress year on year since the previous inspection, and achieve well. They now make progress between Years 7 and 11 that is greater than that seen nationally for non-disadvantaged pupils, although in the core subjects, performance in English is better than in mathematics. While the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in the school is lower than their classmates at Mayflower, the gap in progress between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils has closed in each of the last three years, and is narrowing further this year.
- The school's most-able pupils achieve well. The foundations for this level of success are built upon at Key Stage 3, in which the pupils make a strong start. Setting arrangements help provide the right level of challenge for these pupils to maintain the momentum of their previous high levels of attainment. The close academic and pastoral monitoring of the progress made by all pupils is especially helpful in identifying if the most-able pupils start to slip behind. The school's 'English Baccalaureate (EBacc) pathway' at Key Stage 4 challenges the most-able pupils well and they respond in kind. Typically, around three quarters of them achieve the EBacc, which compares favourably with the national figure for this group, which stands at just a half achieving that standard. Additionally, virtually all of the most-able pupils at Mayflower attain at least five good GCSEs including English and mathematics, which again is higher than the national figure for similar pupils. The progress they make from their starting points is very good and is consistently higher than that seen nationally. As a result of the opportunities made available to them, they become confident speakers, able to articulate their knowledge and understanding in a range of settings; they are also very comfortable when speaking to adults. The importance placed on reading by the school helps them to become equally confident readers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability also do very well at Mayflower. The provision made for them supports their learning highly effectively; this is especially the case for those who attend the 'Progress Centre', which includes a special unit for those who are identified as having dyslexia. The progress made by the pupils over the last four years has risen year on year, such that it is now better than the national picture for pupils who have special educational needs, and indeed for those who do not. The progress of pupils currently in the school is equally strong. The pastoral care for these pupils is particularly effective and the confidence that this builds in them is demonstrable.
- The proportions of pupils not entering sustained education, employment or training are much lower than those seen nationally. The qualifications achieved and the personal attributes developed by the pupils allow them to prepare for their next steps in life with enthusiasm and confidence.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The school's sixth form is good; it is led well and is managed effectively.
- The sixth form is oversubscribed and the learners are expected to work hard, regardless of the courses they take. It is particularly successful in ensuring that the majority of those learners who have previously not attained a higher grade in GCSE English and mathematics do so by the time they leave; the school realises how important this is to enable progression to further study or employment with good prospects for training.
- Expectations of the learners as they enter sixth-form life are raised appropriately and they take on a range of further responsibilities. For example, the organisation of the refurbishment of the sixth form lounge was given over to the learners and required them to take account not only of the wishes of their student body, but also the financial constraints within which they had to work. This was useful as it also ensured that they had to consider ways of creating further income streams, for example through the provision of refreshments. The result has been the development of a well-used, comfortable space that the learners can enjoy socially, as well as being used practically for large presentations.
- The achievements of the learners prior to joining the sixth form are built upon well through good-quality

teaching and assessment. This helps the learners to make the step up to post-16 study and, as in the main school, it is based upon the teachers' very good subject knowledge and sound planning for the sixth formers' learning.

- The learners make good progress overall from their starting points and the subjects they choose mean that overall they achieve well. The progress of those learners studying vocational subjects is exceptionally high and this sets them up very well for their next steps, for example in taking up high-quality apprenticeships. Progress on A-level courses is good, with a number of subjects performing consistently well, for example art and design, business studies, psychology and sociology. Chemistry, English, history and mathematics perform less consistently, although the outcomes are still good. The curriculum is good and offers a broad range of academic and vocational subjects.
- The learners are well supported by tutors and mentors who provide excellent information, advice and guidance about the pathways into future education and careers. This guidance is highly personalised and enables the school to provide study programmes that suit the individual needs of the learners. For example, if learners show an interest in veterinarian science or teaching, they are supported to obtain appropriate work experience to inform their choices and support any applications for higher education courses. However, because the school knows the learners so well, those who already have work experience, for example through part-time jobs, are not compelled to take up further work placements and can use the time to focus on their studies. Coupled with high retention rates and the learners' consistently good achievement, this approach has been successful in securing very good destination outcomes for the learners.

School details

Unique reference number	137048
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	10005600

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,539
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Wright
Headteacher	Mr Lee Brumby
Telephone number	01277 623171
Website	www.mayflowerhigh.essex.sch.uk
Email address	educate@mayflowerhigh.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 January 2012

Information about this school

- Mayflower High School is a larger than average secondary converter academy.
- It provides support to other schools in the local area through the Billericay Community Trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British; the school has a very small minority of pupils from a range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is low compared with the national figure.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with dyslexia within the Progress Centre. This caters for 20 pupils in Years 7 to 11; it was fully subscribed at the time of the inspection. As a result, the proportion of pupils at the school with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 as a short inspection to be carried out in a day. It converted to a full section 5 inspection under the same Act. As a result, the lead inspector and team inspector for the short inspection were joined on the second day by a team of six further inspectors.
- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from: lesson observations, some carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher; short visits to lessons, again some carried out with senior leaders; discussions with pupils and staff; meetings with senior leaders, governors, established and newly qualified teachers; reviews of pupils' work in books and folders; reviews of the school's website, documents and assessment information; and general observations of the daily operations of the school, including in the canteen.
- Inspectors analysed the 255 standard responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, alongside the 46 free text responses to the same questionnaire. They also took into account the 49 responses to the staff questionnaire and 275 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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