

Inspection of Goresbrook School

Cook Road, Dagenham, Essex RM9 6XW

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 October 2024

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Good

The principal of this school is Megan Harris. The school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this school. They are safe and appreciate the level of care that teachers show. Pupils speak of the 'safeguarding community' in school. They can speak to any member of staff if they are worried about anything. Pupils learn how to stay safe.

The school sets ambitious standards, but pupils understand that this is because all staff want them to be their best. This culture of high expectations pervades all aspects of the school's work. By the end of their time at school, pupils achieve exceptionally well. Pupils show high expectations of themselves through the quality of their academic work. They are keen to participate in the school's wide-ranging extra-curricular offer. There are opportunities for pupils to grow as leaders. For example, they can campaign to become a member of the school council or help out as cultural literacy ambassadors or librarians.

Pupils enjoy being part of this diverse school community. They have a strong understanding of difference. They value listening to guest speakers in assembly who share their lived experiences. Pupils display high levels of respect for staff and for each other. They are courteous in their interactions. Pupils know that the school is preparing them well for adult life.

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

There are high expectations for what pupils can learn and achieve, from early years to sixth form. The curriculum offer is ambitious in its breadth and depth. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same ambitious curriculum. The school is quick to identify pupils with additional needs. Staff put timely support in place. They are well trained to adapt learning so that all pupils can make the best progress. The school also ensures that it helps pupils who join the school partway through their education to catch up on missed learning. Over time, pupils achieve exceptionally well, regardless of their backgrounds and needs.

The school has identified the important knowledge that it wants pupils to know. This becomes more demanding as pupils move through the school. For instance, in history lessons, secondary-age pupils engage with a range of source material. As they mature, pupils interpret these sources and evaluate their validity and reliability. Teachers return to important concepts to ensure that pupils have understood them. Similarly, the school prioritises the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers explain and revisit this language to ensure that pupils understand, remember and use it correctly in their work.

Teachers show a strong understanding of curriculum content. In the secondary phase and sixth form, they are subject experts. All teachers are adept at checking pupils' understanding of taught content. They use a range of effective strategies to identify misconceptions quickly and to provide immediate support to rectify them. This extends into the sixth form, where students receive precise feedback. They use this to enhance their work.

The school gives high priority to reading. In Nursery, staff introduce children to a variety of new vocabulary and sounds. This helps children's reading get off to a strong start in Reception. Staff deliver the school's phonics programme with precision. They have frequent opportunities for training. The school makes sure that pupils receive focused support to catch up if they fall behind. Pupils take home a reading book each week to practise the sounds they have learned in class.

For those pupils who need it, help with reading continues into the secondary phase. All pupils enjoy a class reader together. As part of the school's 'cultural literacy' programme, pupils read widely. They encounter non-fiction texts such as newspaper articles. Pupils analyse and discuss what they have read. They often visit the school's two libraries. Pupils enjoy choosing books to read for pleasure.

Pupils show high levels of commitment to their studies. Their behaviour in class and around the school is impressive. Pupils value the excellent education they are receiving, and attendance rates are high. The school intervenes swiftly when its high expectations of attendance are not met.

The school's work to prepare pupils for life after school is exceptional. Pupils learn about mental and physical health and well-being. Older pupils encounter topics such as the difference between 'banter' and harassment. Sixth-form students learn to manage their finances when starting work or university. They benefit from extensive support with university applications. Pupils receive detailed and timely guidance about careers, including apprenticeships. They benefit from opportunities to take part in work experience. As part of the 'Goresbrook Guarantee', all secondary pupils visit a university each year. Pupils go to theatres and museums. They develop their talents and interests through the extra-curricular offer. Pupils choose from a range of opportunities, including sports, debating, music and drama.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They believe that leaders help them to manage their workload. The trust offers opportunities for professional development. These are well utilised by staff at all levels. Staff value collaborating with their peers in other trust schools. Governors work with trustees to provide effective challenge through regular visits, which helps to maintain and raise standards. Parents and carers appreciate the community feel of the school. They are grateful for the excellent education it provides to their children.

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

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| Unique reference number | 140962 |
| Local authority | Barking and Dagenham |
| Inspection number | 10345985 |
| Type of school | All-through |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,055 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 89 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Christian Brodie |
| CEO of the trust | Jon Coles |
| Principal | Megan Harris |
| Website | www.goresbrookschool.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 12 and 13 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of United Learning Trust.
- Since the last inspection, the secondary principal has been appointed as all-through principal.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- 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 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 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 held meetings with representatives from the trust, the principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with a representative of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, French, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about 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 staff, leaders 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lisa Strong, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Hannah Glossop | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Caroline Stone | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ian Scotchbrook | Ofsted Inspector |
| Katerina Christodoulou | Ofsted Inspector |

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