

Inspection of Drapers' Academy

Settle Road, Harold Hill, Romford, Essex RM3 9XR

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 March 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The principal of this school is Gillian Dineen. This school is part of Drapers' Multi-Academy 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), Darren Luckhurst, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tim Page.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe here and their individual needs are well understood. They are fully included and happily welcomed to the school community. Pupils know that all staff will respond swiftly and effectively to any concerns. Pupils are encouraged to become leaders. For example, sixth-form students volunteer to help younger pupils with their reading. Pupils eagerly lead house events and produce the school newspaper. Sports leaders design activities to support their younger peers, including primary-aged children.

The school is highly ambitious for their pupils. Pupils follow a broad and well-considered curriculum, including in the sixth form. Pupils make good progress through the curriculum. The school is continuing to work on improving outcomes in national examinations and ensuring that work is of high quality. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Pupils behave well in the vast majority of lessons.

Pupils are encouraged to lead and take part in additional activities to further enhance their learning. These include photography, choir, football and debating. An increasing range of educational visits adds to the taught curriculum. Opportunities are provided by the school's sponsors, for example visits to Drapers' Hall and Queen Mary University.

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

The curriculum matches the ambition and scope of what is expected nationally. In the majority of subjects, the curriculum is carefully sequenced to build on pupils' learning over time. This includes consideration of pupils' learning at different feeder primary schools. In history, for example, pupils deepen their knowledge of monarchy by building an increasingly complex understanding of different monarchs from around the world.

Teachers are experts in their subjects and present information clearly. They routinely use activities to recall previous learning. Teachers' checks on learning help them track pupils' progress through the curriculum. However, these checks do not consistently identify and correct misconceptions or gaps in knowledge. As a result, any gaps in knowledge are sometimes not sharply addressed. In some subjects, the work that pupils produce is of high quality. In art, for example, pupils' work demonstrates a wide range of artistic knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary. In other subjects, pupils' work is of variable quality. Some work is incomplete and does not consistently show that pupils are building a secure body of knowledge over time.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Pupils who need more help with their reading receive additional support. This ensures that most pupils read with increasing accuracy, fluency and confidence. Regular training for staff enables them to use a range of reading strategies to support pupils to access the broader curriculum.

Pupils with SEND are swiftly identified. The school carefully considers the support needed for these pupils, including help from external agencies. Staff use their extensive training to provide support that meets the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND are

particularly well supported to carefully consider their next stage of education, employment or training. For example, they benefit from internships and workplace coaches.

The school's high expectations of behaviour are clear and well understood. Pupils learn what it means to be a pupil of Drapers' and to embody the school's values of kindness, respect and purpose. As a result, pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school site. Any behaviour incidents are closely followed up by staff. The school provides relentless support for attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance is increasing. For some families, this remains an ongoing priority.

Pupils follow a well-sequenced personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. This is sharply focused on the needs of the pupils and includes a range of workshops, assemblies and guest speakers. Pupils regularly revisit key knowledge, including consent and online safety. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, have multiple opportunities to prepare for their next stage of education, employment or training. This includes a careers fair and individual interview practice. Sixth-form students enjoy a range of university visits. Many progress to their first-choice university.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported and appreciate the steps taken to reduce their workload. Staff at all levels value their opportunities for professional development. The school takes multiple steps to engage with parents, including regular coffee mornings and home visits. Leaders and those responsible for governance are ambitious for the school. They use their forensic understanding of the strengths of the school to provide highly effective challenge and support. For example, when published outcomes do not match leaders' expectations, the school has undertaken careful and detailed analysis of any contributory factors. As a result, extra support is in place to help pupils to achieve highly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers do not check pupils' understanding as sharply as they could. As a result, some pupils continue to have gaps in their learning and are not fully ready to learn new content. The school must ensure that staff consistently check for and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- In some subjects, some teachers do not ensure that pupils have completed tasks or check that pupils' work demonstrates a sufficient understanding of their learning. As a result, some pupils' work is not consistently of high quality. Leaders should ensure the use of consistent strategies across different subjects supports high-quality and accurate written work, which can be used to help pupils to learn and remember more.

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	136090
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10366922
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,208
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	185
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tim Page
CEO of the trust	Darren Luckhurst
Principal	Gillian Dineen
Website	www.drapersacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- There are two sponsors of the school, The Drapers' Company and Queen Mary University of London.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers and five unregistered alternative providers. Places are commissioned by Havering local authority.
- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the principal and other senior leaders. The inspectors met with members of the trustees, governing body and a representative from the Drapers' Multi-Academy Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, design and technology and modern foreign languages. 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.
- The curriculum in other subjects was considered as part of the inspection.
- 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 gathered the views of pupils, parents and carers and staff through both discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Hannah Glossop, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Piers Saunders	Ofsted Inspector
Jeff Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Ogugua Okolo-Angus	Ofsted Inspector
Luisa Bonelli	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 looked-after children, 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025