

The James Hornsby School

Address: Leinster Road, Laindon, Basildon, Essex, SS15 5NX

Unique reference number (URN): 138865

Inspection report: 3 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development is a clear strength of the school. The programme is coherent and highly inclusive. It helps pupils build confidence, character and cultural awareness. Pupils talk knowledgeably about respectful relationships, consent and staying safe online and offline. They can explain how their learning influences everyday choices in school and in the community.

The school's 'education-extra' programme gives pupils access to a wide range of free clubs before school, at lunch and after school. Pupils participate in academic help, creative activities and sport. They enjoy activities ranging from science, technology, engineering and mathematics to choir, football and interest-based societies. Leaders track pupils' participation carefully and ensure that disadvantaged and more vulnerable pupils are able to take part. Leaders celebrate pupils' commitment.

Learning beyond the classroom is designed with care. Pupils take part in local and London-based day visits and occasional overseas trips. Where costs are a barrier, leaders provide support so pupils do not miss out. These experiences help pupils to apply classroom learning to real-life contexts and develop independence, resilience and teamwork. In addition, the school's cultural awareness day and guest speakers broaden pupils' horizons and promote respect for difference.

Careers education is mapped carefully across year groups. Pupils meet employers, training providers and higher education institutions. Guidance is timely and practical. Leaders review destinations and use this information to refine the programme. Character education is visible in tutor time, assemblies and pupil leadership roles. Older pupils take on roles that help others, and younger pupils notice and want to follow their example. Together, these opportunities prepare pupils well for life beyond school and help them develop healthy habits, confidence and ambition.

Expected standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Attendance is in line with national averages and is slowly improving over time. Leaders take early action when attendance starts to slip. Staff remove practical barriers, for example through breakfast provision and pastoral contact at the start of the day. They work well with families, and when issues are more complex, they seek to remove barriers. Leaders track patterns carefully so support and challenge are timely. More pupils now arrive punctually and are ready to learn.

Behaviour is calm and orderly. Pupils move calmly around the site, follow instructions and settle quickly to work. In lessons, pupils listen respectfully and take part in discussion. Where standards dip, staff apply consequences fairly and help pupils re-engage. Pupils say bullying is uncommon. When it happens, staff deal with incidents quickly and follow up with

support and education. Leaders analyse behaviour and safeguarding information to spot themes. They then adjust teaching, pastoral support or curriculum content. For example, they reinforce respectful conduct and online safety through assemblies and tutor activities. Participation in clubs and enrichment also supports positive behaviour and attitudes by building pupils' sense of belonging and success beyond the classroom. Overall, pupils learn in an environment that is respectful and enables them to focus on their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is broad, ambitious and well sequenced. It builds securely from key stage 3 into key stage 4. At key stage 4, pupils study a range of GCSE courses, and vocational subjects, where appropriate. Pupils know and follow well-established classroom routines. They learn the curriculum in a calm and purposeful environment.

Teachers across subjects generally follow the school's expected approach to teaching. Teachers usually explain new content clearly and model for pupils how to approach tasks. Where practice is strongest, teaching helps pupils to understand how to strengthen their work.

Staff assess pupils' understanding during lessons. In some subjects, these checks are precise and timely. In others, they are less effective. As a result, misconceptions are not always identified quickly, and some pupils do not develop the depth in learning that they need. Some pupils who are capable of more demanding work do not always have the opportunity to think more deeply about their learning and make the progress they could.

Teachers know pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Staff make appropriate adjustments for pupils with SEND and those with other barriers to learning. This helps these pupils access the curriculum and take part successfully in lessons.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have built an inclusive culture. Pupils are known well and get the help they need to take part in school life and learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils who are disadvantaged and those facing social or emotional challenges are supported through tailored classroom practice, targeted support and secure pastoral care.

Staff understand what pupils find difficult and use this information to help them learn well. Teachers use this information to adapt lessons. Extra help for reading, communication and managing emotions helps pupils develop the skills they need to learn well.

Support for pupils with SEND is becoming consistently more effective. Leaders are strengthening the way they set and review pupils' individual goals. They involve pupils and parents more closely. This helps staff understand what is working, adjust strategies quickly and ensure pupils continue to make steady progress over time.

Leaders keep a close eye on the attendance of more vulnerable pupils. Early help is provided when concerns appear. Where issues are complex, leaders work with external

agencies. These checks and support systems help pupils attend more regularly and take part successfully in day-to-day learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and governors understand the school's strengths and priorities. Since the previous inspection, they have stabilised staffing, strengthened safeguarding and improved behaviour and attendance. Leaders are clear about their priorities to raise achievement for all pupils.

Leaders keep the curriculum under review and ensure that a broad curriculum is maintained at key stage 3 followed by appropriate pathways at key stage 4. Leaders approach their work with the school's ethos and values in mind. Leaders promote aspiration, resilience and removing barriers, with the ambition that 'together we excel'. Staff speak positively about professional development and feel well supported to refine their teaching practice. Leaders focus on approaches that help teachers explain ideas clearly, model learning and check understanding effectively.

Governors and trustees provide effective challenge and support. They use information about attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and achievement to hold leaders to account. Governors understand the community the school serves and think carefully about how decisions affect disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that inclusion runs through the school's work.

Leaders have created conditions for pupils to learn, including calm routines, improved attendance and a coherent curriculum. These conditions now support pupils to learn well and benefit from the school's inclusive culture and distinctive offer.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Overall, examination outcomes remain below national averages, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils do not progress as well as similar pupils nationally. Over time, disadvantaged pupils have achieved below national averages. While leaders are taking action to improve pupils' achievement, these improvements have not had time to translate into better examination outcomes.

Current pupils learn the intended curriculum and progress well from their various starting points. Pupils are developing secure core knowledge and skills, especially in key stage 3. Leaders have developed provision for Year 11 that is clearly planned and more coherent. This provides Year 11 pupils with focused and subject-specific help to support their achievement. Leaders' actions are beginning to make a difference to how well pupils achieve.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a calm, welcoming and inclusive school. They feel safe, supported and valued. Many pupils describe the school as a family. Staff know the pupils well. Pupils are confident that staff listen and act when concerns are raised.

The start of the school day is orderly and purposeful. Pupils arrive on time and settle quickly into learning. Pupils move calmly around the school and engage politely with staff. In lessons, behaviour is typically respectful and focused. Pupils understand what is expected. When pupils find things difficult, staff step in early and help them get back on track.

Pupils say bullying is rare. They know how to report worries and are confident that staff deal with issues quickly and fairly. Pupils also show a firm understanding of respect, tolerance and difference. Staff reinforce these values through tutor time, assemblies and whole-school events. These help pupils think about equality and diversity in everyday life.

There is a vast range of opportunities beyond lessons that broaden pupils' horizons. Clubs run before school, at breaks and after school. They include academic help, creative activities and sport. Educational visits range from local museums and theatres to London landmarks and occasional overseas trips. Leaders systematically remove barriers so pupils who are disadvantaged participate fully. Pupils value these experiences. They say clubs and trips consistently help them build confidence, friendships and independence.

Pupils are positive about their learning. They want to do well and usually produce work of a secure standard. However, this positive day-to-day experience is not reflected in published examination results. Leaders know this and are taking steps to help pupils' positive attitudes translate into secure learning and better achievement.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that improvements to teaching and the curriculum support pupils to achieve better outcomes in national examinations, particularly in English and mathematics, so that achievement reflects the school's raised expectations.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding and use assessment consistently well, so misconceptions are addressed quickly and pupils build secure, accurate knowledge over time.
- Leaders need to ensure that pupils in key stage 4, who are ready for more complex and demanding learning, have work that is well matched to their needs so they make greater progress through the curriculum.

About this inspection

The school is part of Zenith 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,

Andy Hodgkinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stewart Taylor.

The chair of the local governing body is Robert Brooks.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors visited lessons across key stages 3 and 4, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons and informally around the school site.

Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral and safeguarding staff and a range of teaching and support staff. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local governing body and the trust about leadership, oversight, support and challenge.

Inspectors also took account of the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff shared during the inspection, alongside other evidence gathered by the inspection team.

Inspectors confirmed the following about the school:

The school does not have post-16 provision.
The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Mrs Tammy Nicholls

Lead inspector:

James Chester, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Diana Fletcher, Ofsted Inspector

Sharon Pritchard, Ofsted Inspector

Ross Marks, His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Sutton, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 3 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,037

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

900

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

48.22%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.66%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.10%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	26.2%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.9%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.9%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	38.8	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	40.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	41.8	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.32	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.32	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	11.9%	25.6%	Below
2023/24 (final)	19.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	20.6%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	31.9	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.6	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35.4	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.84	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.67	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference

between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	11.9%	52.8%	-40.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	19.7%	53.1%	-33.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	20.6%	52.4%	-31.8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	31.9	50.3	-18.4
2023/24 (final)	32.6	50.0	-17.4
2022/23 (final)	35.4	50.3	-14.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.84	0.16	-1.00
2022/23 (final)	-0.67	0.17	-0.83

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	87%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	86%	94%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.8%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.3%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.6%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	23.3%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	28.1%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	28.0%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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