

Claydon High School

Address: Church Lane, IP6 0EG

Unique reference number (URN): 144214

Inspection report: 2 December 2025

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 well-being

Strong standard 

Leaders have put pupils' personal development and wellbeing at the heart of the school's offer. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The 'LIFE' curriculum has been carefully constructed so that pupils gain a secure and robust knowledge of the world around them. Pupils understand different issues, faiths and perspectives. They know how to make safe, moral and healthy choices, for instance when they are online or in relationships. This means that pupils develop their character and become considerate, active citizens of modern British society.

The comprehensive careers education and guidance teaches pupils about the world of work. This is, wherever possible, first-hand. Pupils experience work, research careers, and meet employers as well as apprenticeship providers. Pupils get clear and impartial guidance, so they make informed and ambitious choices about their next steps.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, fully participate in the extensive offer of clubs, visits and competitions. They practise speaking languages on overseas trips. Pupils develop their appreciation of the arts when they visit the theatre. Student leadership is an important part of the school. Pupils have a voice and are consulted, for instance in developing the rewards policy. They learn about democracy when they vote for student representatives and take part in mock elections. Pupils develop their self-confidence through opportunities, such as leading assemblies, including on Remembrance Day.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. They can successfully access opportunities for further education, employment and training. As pupils progress through the curriculum, most pupils acquire the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need. They can increasingly explain, clearly communicate and apply what they have learned in a range of subjects. Most pupils become securely literate and numerate. However, a few pupils, as leaders know, struggle to communicate their ideas in writing as well as they could, especially in key stage 3.

Published outcomes for pupils in national assessments are broadly in line with national averages across the range of subjects offered. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils make notable progress from their starting points. The school has clear plans to further improve aspects of the curriculum and teaching so that pupils consistently achieve highly.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Consequently, all groups of pupils consistently attend very well. Staff swiftly identify those pupils who may find it hard to attend. They work closely with pupils, families, and, when needed, external agencies. This helps them find and tackle the reasons for lower attendance. Staff provide the help pupils need. This helps them come to school more often.

Pupils feel safe and confident to be themselves. Leaders have established a very positive culture. Relationships are positive. Pupils respect themselves and typically treat others with consideration and kindness. They become increasingly independent and self-reliant. The school has established clear routines and raised expectations of pupils' conduct around the school and in lessons. Pupils understand and follow them. Usually, staff follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. This means that classrooms are typically calm and purposeful. Pupils want to do well. When teaching is effective, pupils fully engage in their learning. When pupils find it harder to access the curriculum, a minority of pupils are not as engaged. Pastoral staff work patiently and skilfully with pupils who struggle to focus or meet the school's expectations. Pupils respond positively to this help and improve their attitudes to learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a broad, aspirational curriculum. In key stage 4, they offer a wide range of academic and vocational options. This curriculum is well designed across all subjects so that pupils build important knowledge. Staff teach this so that knowledge is taught step by step. Pupils use subject 'one-pagers' that identify key vocabulary and summarise key concepts. This helps pupils recall key terms and apply what they have learned.

Lessons follow a consistent structure. This helps pupils settle well into lessons. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Most teaching is at least effective. Some teaching, especially in key stage 4, is much more so. Where it is most robust, teachers check pupils' understanding rigorously. They adjust activities with real skill so that these gaps are closed and errors are fixed. Teachers precisely adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so all pupils learn the curriculum well. When teaching is less effective, staff do not check the learning of pupils carefully enough. When this happens, they do not adapt and adjust the curriculum precisely so that pupils can gain knowledge securely.

Leaders know where provision is a strength and where further development is needed to improve aspects of learning. The school has recently introduced a whole-school approach to developing pupils' literacy across the curriculum. Pupils who need additional support with their mathematics, reading and writing receive it. This helps pupils access the curriculum and communicate more clearly.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Every pupil is fully valued for who they are. Pupils belong and contribute to the school community. They are proud to be themselves.

The school uses robust systems for identifying and tracking pupils' progress. This includes pupils who attend alternative provision, looked-after children and those who are, or were, known to children's social care. Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively, enabling pupils to consistently access a wide range of opportunities.

The school works closely with parents and carers and other agencies to make sure that pupils receive the support to which they are entitled. Staff identify pupils' attributes, their personal and academic needs and any barriers to learning. This assessment helps pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access the curriculum. Staff receive clear details on 'pupil passports' about the pupils who may need extra support or adjustments. Therefore, staff know each pupil well. Staff receive appropriate training to support pupils. Typically, this support is well tailored to meet pupils' needs.

A broad range of interventions, especially for pupils' literacy, helps pupils to gain important knowledge. The school regularly checks, designs and reviews its support so that it fits the needs of pupils as they progress through school. Even so, at times, targets, particularly for pupils with education, health and care plans, are not specific enough. This sometimes makes it hard for staff to make specific adaptations for pupils and measure their impact. Some of these pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Trust and school leaders rigorously check the school's provision. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths as well as how and where it should develop further. Trustees and the academy committee check the safety and progress of pupils. They also check how leaders use resources such as pupil premium funding. In addition, they review how well the curriculum is being taught. Leaders understand what is needed to embed improvements in teaching and learning, ensuring that all pupils gain the breadth and depth of knowledge to achieve highly. Work is underway to ensure that leaders at all levels have the knowledge and support they need to embed the improvements they are making. However, this is at an early stage and is not yet always rigorous enough. The school provides extensive support for staff wellbeing and workload. Staff are therefore very positive about their work, which contributes to high staff retention. Parents and carers are similarly very positive about the school.

Staff ensure that they keep pupils safe and that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, enjoy school and feel that they belong there. Staff work vigilantly to safeguard and support pupils. Leaders work closely with external agencies to protect vulnerable pupils and to get them the support they need.

Staff receive effective professional development to carry out their roles. They have begun to work closely with the adjacent primary school to build a curriculum with a common language

and approaches. This should support pupils to seamlessly transition between the schools. Staff visit other trust schools and collaborate to pick up and share best practice.

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

Pupils enjoy attending this very happy school. They know that if they have any worries or problems, caring staff will provide them with the support they need to overcome them. Pupils usually get on well with each other and with staff. They are consistently polite and respectful. Pupils understand the importance of diversity. Bullying and the use of unkind language are therefore both very rare and never tolerated. Pupils know how to be 'upstanders' rather than 'bystanders' if their peers have any issues. This ensures that pupils feel safe, valued and welcome in the school community.

Pupils enjoy learning the broad, ambitious and usually well-taught curriculum. This helps pupils gain important knowledge. As they progress through the curriculum, pupils become increasingly able to apply and communicate what they have learned. Staff know the individual needs of pupils. They use this knowledge to provide pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, the support they need to reduce barriers to learning.

Pupils relish a plethora of opportunities to develop their talents, broaden their interests and contribute to the school. They attend a vast array of clubs, including coding, 'knit and natter', games and sports. Pupils participate in many trips and residential visits. They perform in musical and theatre productions. These enhance pupils' knowledge of and interest in the curriculum. Pupils learn to be active citizens. They run tea parties for the local community. Many pupils hold student leadership positions. Pupils benefit from numerous interesting opportunities to learn about the world of work. They encounter a wide range of employers and education providers.

Pupils usually meet the school's high expectations of behaviour. Particularly when lessons are precisely adapted and engaging, pupils work with real enthusiasm. When pupils need help to improve their behaviour, they receive it. As a result, pupils improve their conduct and attitudes to learning. Because the school is a positive, supportive environment for everyone, pupils attend very well.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop precise target setting for pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and teachers' use of formative assessment so that adaptations to the curriculum are consistently effective.
 - Leaders should develop their approaches to teaching literacy so that pupils read and write well. This will support pupils to communicate their knowledge across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should continue to strengthen teaching and learning across the school so staff consistently and skilfully adapt the curriculum to engage pupils fully in learning and deepen the knowledge they need to achieve highly.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff at all levels have the support and knowledge that they need to embed and drive continuous improvement in the areas for which they are responsible.
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About this inspection

Claydon High School is part of Penrose 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, Sarah Skinner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Smyth.

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.

Inspection activities:

The inspection team spoke with the school and trust leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. They also held discussions with representatives of the trust board. Inspectors also spoke to leaders at other provisions who work with the school's looked-after pupils and those attending alternative provision. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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.

The school makes use of 5 alternative provisions, one of which is unregistered.

Headteacher: Mark Ismay

Lead inspector:

Steve Woodley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Bessie Owen, His Majesty's Inspector

Nina Marabese, His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Dick, Ofsted Inspector

Louise Cooper, His Majesty's 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 2 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

771

Below 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

675

Well 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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

20.49%

Below 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

5.45%

Well above 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

12.32%

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

Well below 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	41.6%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24	33.3%	45.9%	Below
2022/23	42.5%	45.3%	Close to average

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	45.0	45.9	Close to average
2023/24	44.1	45.9	Close to average
2022/23	45.6	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	-0.18	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23	-0.07	-0.03	Close to average

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	28.6%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24	20.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23	20.0%	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	33.1	34.9	Close to average
2023/24	37.1	34.6	Close to average
2022/23	34.8	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	-0.90	-0.57	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23	-0.53	-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	28.6%	52.8%	-24.3 pp
2023/24	20.8%	53.1%	-32.3 pp
2022/23	20.0%	52.4%	-32.4 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	33.1	50.3	-17.2
2023/24	37.1	50.0	-13.0
2022/23	34.8	50.3	-15.5

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	-0.90	0.16	-1.07
2022/23	-0.53	0.17	-0.70

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	95%	91%	Average
2022 leavers	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers	94%	94%	Average

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 (1 term)	6.7%	7.7%	Close to average
2023/24	7.3%	8.9%	Below
2022/23	7.3%	9.0%	Below

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 (1 term)	17.5%	21.1%	Close to average
2023/24	20.9%	25.6%	Below
2022/23	20.0%	26.5%	Below

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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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