



At Plume Academy, we consider ourselves to be at least typically 'Good' in terms of overall effectiveness because we believe the provision in all the following individual Ofsted Framework areas to be at least typically good too:

- The outcomes for pupils
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- The quality of personal development, behaviour and welfare
- The quality of leadership and management
- Post 16 provision provided by our College

**This was verified by Ofsted themselves after a two-day visit in January 2018 when they summarised the following as key findings for parents, carers and students:**

- This is a good school
- The principal and senior leaders have created a culture of high expectations.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders' actions are linked to long-term, sustainable improvements.
- Pupils' opportunities to follow a curriculum well matched to their interests mean that a very high proportion progress successfully on leaving.
- Staff and governors are very ambitious for pupils. Their high expectations and actions are successfully raising pupils' aspirations.
- Senior leaders' actions, including the implementation of the highly effective training programme, have successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning.
- Attendance has improved; it is above average. Differences in attendance that existed previously for some groups have narrowed significantly.
- The strong relationships between pupils and staff embody the 'respect yourself, respect others and respect the environment' agenda.
- Effective systems track individual pupils' progress accurately. This now gives governors the useful information they need to support and challenge leaders effectively.
- Pupils move around the large but narrow site promptly and sensibly. Staff are highly visible. Pupils behave well at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They know the value of making a good impression. Inspectors saw no incidents of poor behaviour.
- Parents are positive; 95% of those who completed Ofsted's Parent View survey would recommend the school.
- The sixth form is well led. Students attend well, are taught well and make good progress.
- Processes to safeguard pupils are robust. Staff know pupils well and provide good levels of care, including to the most vulnerable pupils.
- Current pupils make good progress. In a few subjects, including mathematics, some could make better progress if teachers matched work to their needs more precisely.
- Disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress, helping them to catch up with their peers. Leaders are focused on reducing differences further.
- Year 11 pupils' progress was slightly below average last year. Senior leaders have a clear focus on improving outcomes further; some middle leaders are less clear.

As Maldon's community academy (convertor, January 2012), Plume enjoys a unique position as the largest school in the district and the only secondary school in the town of Maldon. At present, we have 101 FTE (118

headcount) equivalent teaching staff and 88 FTE support staff (142 headcount). The academy is fully staffed and at present and as stated, we feel we have this very much in order to ensure there are no gaps in terms of the quality provision provided to our students.

There was also a continued trend of low teaching staff turnover in 2017/18 but we are extremely pleased with the calibre and potential of those replacements we worked exceptionally hard to recruit.

Our Year 7 student intake is from more than 25 primary schools and after a rigorous marketing drive in the autumn of 2015, numbers for the following September rose from 248 in September 2015, to 295 in September 2016. The Year 7 intake numbers remained high for September 2017 and are higher still at September 2018. Our sixth form provision, Plume College, offers a wide range of Level 2 and 3 courses to approximately 235 students of all abilities, is well regarded by students and parents/carers alike, and continues to attract numbers of external applicants.

Plume's split site location has been maximised by developing three linked but distinct campuses: years 7 and 8 at Mill Road and years 9-11 and the College at Farnbridge Road.

Prior attainment at KS2 is significantly below national for most year groups. Consequently, as a fully inclusive comprehensive, we offer a broad, balanced, rich and diverse curriculum. Distinctive features include our very well-established and highly successful Flexible Learning Programme, as well as our own Learning and Behaviour Support Centre.

**Trustees** are vastly experienced, fully committed, extremely rigorous and highly effective in terms of their scrutiny of the academy's work. As well as main Trustee meetings, there are sub-committees around all the main key indicators of performance as well as an overarching Academy Trust Executive Group. Trustees also visit the academy on a regular basis which is greatly appreciated as well as respected by the academy's SLT and other stakeholders. The vast majority are also current or former parents and therefore have a real vested interest in ensuring things continue to progress and develop over time, whilst also ensuring the monitoring and scrutiny of the SLTs work in relation the academy's KIPs remains their key focus.

### **The Community**

Plume aspires to be at the heart of a community which is distinctive as well as diverse. However, we have built many excellent partnerships over the years and these include Our Aim Higher and various community partnerships also help us to continue to address these issues and as an academy, we strongly believe that disadvantage should never be a barrier to achievement.

An extensive and diverse range of enrichment opportunities ensure that community involvement is embedded – 'Taxi Day' and our developed links with schools in the UK and abroad are examples of the energy with which our staff and students engage with local, national and international communities.

Our students and staff have also been recipients of The Diana and The Jack Petchey Awards, and we continue to conduct a whole Year 10 work experience programme and Year 12 work shadowing scheme at the end of every summer term. These form part of an established, embedded and formally recognised IAG programme, and in June 2018, we were also formally re-accredited with 'Healthy Schools' status again, after a great deal of hard work and of course which we were immensely proud to receive.

### **External Links**

We pride ourselves on our local and regional reputation and distinctive 'outward facing' approach in working with other schools, external agencies, specialist providers, local businesses and a variety of other providers. We are a founder member of the 10-school 'Consortium for School Improvement', benefitting from shared INSET and disseminating effective local and regional practice. We are also an active member of both ASHE and MESH, the countywide and regional secondary headteachers' forums, and are currently working in partnership with several Essex schools with the core objective of mutually beneficial support and continuing school improvement.

We are also committed to developing teachers new to the profession – our strong and established links with Mid-Essex Teacher Training and TES Global ensures that teacher training is given a very high priority, contributing to our aim to become an 'outstanding' education provider.

We are embracing the exciting, rapid changes in terms of routes into teaching and are a lead school for 'School Direct', again, working with TES Global. This we feel will widen the scope of our partnerships and ensure we recruit as well as retain high quality teaching staff.

Plume staff are also fully committed and vastly experienced in terms of working with multi-agencies, are members of the local primary consortium (the Blackwater Partnership) and Behaviour and Attendance Partnership, as well as other local and regional forums. Sportsmark Gold, Artsmark Gold, the International Schools Award and the Recognition of Quality Award (RoQA) for Careers Education and Information, Advice and Guidance also directly evidence high quality accreditation of our distinctive work and total commitment to our students and families.