



Head teacher Damian Lee with pupils at Mayflower High School in Billericay  
IAN SPENCER

News

## Top school seeks new head

BRENTWOOD Ursuline Convent High School is recruiting for a new head teacher.

The Catholic school, in Queen's Road, has established itself as one of Essex's best non-selective schools.

It recently ranked in top place in a Government performance table.

The Ursuline recorded an attainment 8 score of 61 for the academic year 24/25. The school also recorded 77.2 per cent of English

and maths GCSEs at Grade 5 or above. In its most recent Ofsted report, published in 2023, inspectors described the school's quality of education and behaviour and attitudes as outstanding.

The closing date for applicants ended on Thursday (February 5), with shortlisting scheduled to begin on February 11.

Interviews are due to follow on February 25 and 26.

# Head proud of school's praise from watchdog

By **MATT LEE**

matt.lee@reachplc.com  
@MattLeeJourno

A PREVIOUSLY failing school has made "significant improvements" after a reset of its culture and ethos.

Ofsted inspectors praised the "polite and courteous" students and "highly knowledgeable" teaching staff at Mayflower High School in Billericay.

The school had previously been graded 'requires improvement' by Ofsted in March 2023, but it has improved under head teacher Damian Lee, who arrived in post on the day the negative report was published three years ago.

Mr Lee, a teacher with more than two decades of experience, and the other leaders at Mayflower have made "significant improvements", an Ofsted report said.

It added: "They have reset the culture and ethos of the school. Leaders have developed a vision focused entirely on benefiting all students.

"Leaders relentlessly reinforce the school's core values. They live these values through their own behaviour and interactions. Every member of the school community has clarity about what can, and what should, be achieved. Staff understand how to deliver quality teaching and provide well-matched care for students. Parents can see the difference.

"They are supportive and appreciate the positive impact the school is making on their children's lives."

Mr Lee is proud of the school's transformation, but added that they are "nowhere near finished".

He said: "The report acknowledges the great work we have done and the successes we have had, but we want more.

"The potential here is so much higher than anywhere I have worked before. As good as this report is, it is just a snapshot of two days showing where we have come in the last three years.

"Imagine where we could be in another four or five years when they visit again. But we do not do this for Ofsted; we do it for every student who comes through our door to ensure they have a great day every day.

"The potential is massive here. We will not slow down or stop. It is now about pushing on to the next level. We have just got started."

Mr Lee added: "When we arrived three years ago, the school was in a bad way, and parental confidence was at rock bottom.

"We have had a big change in personnel. The children are the same children we had three years ago; they just are now being taught well in a better environment. We now want to move away from where the school was.

"What we have done is build a culture where staff feel valued, students are proud to wear the Mayflower badge and, in turn, parents are happy with the experience their children are getting."

Mayflower High School was the first school in Essex to be inspected under the new Ofsted framework.

“The potential here is so much higher than anywhere I have worked before.”  
Head teacher Damian Lee