

# The Ellington and Hereson School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135826
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	360761
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Long HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	781
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Carpenter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tony Hamson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>School address</b>	Newlands Lane Ramsgate Kent CT12 6RH
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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work including approximately 16 hours of teaching, tutorial sessions, an assembly and observations of students at break and lunchtimes. Discussions were held informally with students between lessons, with five focus groups of students, with staff and with the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors scrutinised students' work and documents including safeguarding procedures, student assessment information, school development plans and questionnaires from 54 parents and carers, 100 students and 39 staff.

## Information about the school

The Ellington and Hereson School is smaller than most secondary schools and is in an area where there is selective education. It opened as a Trust school in September 2009 after the amalgamation of separate boys' and girls' schools. Its roll is smaller than those of the two schools it replaced due to falling numbers of eligible students in the area. Since amalgamation, most of the teaching has taken place in what was the girls' school, newly built in 2007. Only the Year 11 boys were taught at the boys' school site this year, but were the last students to do so. The site had been vacated by the time of the inspection. Boys and girls learn in separate classes for most lessons, with the exception of some Key Stage 4 option subjects. The school has specialist status for humanities and collaborates with a college of further education to provide Key Stage 4 courses. The great majority of students are White British and very few speak first languages other than English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is much higher than in most schools. Government floor targets were not met in 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety</b>	<b>3</b>
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

## Key findings

- This satisfactory school has been through significant change and has established solid foundations for improvement.
- From low starting points, students make satisfactory progress. Attainment when they leave is below average but improving steadily, most notably in mathematics and English, and gaps in achievement between different groups are narrowing as their progress improves. Students achieve well on vocational courses.
- Better tracking of students' progress and intervention when progress is slow are now embedded practice in mathematics and English but less established in other subjects.
- Teaching is satisfactory but inconsistent. Assessment information is not always used well enough to plan tasks which challenge students of all abilities or enable them to move their own learning forward, and some lessons foster an over dependency on staff guidance. Homework is not exploited fully as a vehicle to develop students' independent learning skills.
- Most students, and their parents and carers, say they feel safe and enjoy the new school. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. It is sometimes good, but students easily become restless when lessons are not engaging. Attendance is below average and improving, although the school is not fully engaging some parents and carers whose children attend poorly.
- The headteacher and senior team have steered the school securely through turbulent times. The assessment system in mathematics and English provides a good template for other subjects but has yet to be deployed consistently. School development planning centres on suitably challenging overall targets, but the impact of the steps intended to reach those targets is not always clear enough to show what is or is not working. Subject leaders' use of lesson observation and analysis of assessment data to improve provision is

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inconsistent, leading to variability in progress between subjects.

- Most parents and carers take a positive view of school, but a significant minority have concerns over the level of communication with them about their children's learning and about behaviour in lessons.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, and where leadership and management are no better than satisfactory, may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Increase the impact of teaching on learning by:
  - making consistently good use of assessment information to plan activities in lessons so that students of all abilities are fully challenged
  - ensuring students clearly understand the features of successful work so they can take responsibility for moving their learning forward to meet their targets
  - using homework effectively to develop students' independent learning skills.
- Engage more effectively with parents and carers to:
  - tackle the attendance of persistently absent students so they attend regularly
  - enable them to support their children's learning.
- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels through:
  - making sure all the actions intended to bring about improvement have precisely defined goals so their impact can be checked, adjustments made if required, and the next steps planned
  - developing consistently effective leadership within all subject areas.

**Main report**

Most students make satisfactory progress over time. Their attainment is rising but remains variable between different subjects. Students' basic literacy and numeracy skills are below the levels expected. Last year's GCSE results were below average overall, but results were above average on vocational courses. In lessons, students make satisfactory progress and usually approach learning with positive attitudes. They achieve most where there are linked sequences of tasks and where they understand what to do to succeed in their work. This is most evident in vocational courses, leading to good progress and enjoyment of learning. It is also more common in mathematics and English lessons than elsewhere. Students enjoy lessons which feature a mixture of activities, including practical tasks, because these enable the exploration of ideas through physical engagement. Achievement is hindered by students' relatively weak independent learning skills. Where students are required to think for themselves they are not always confident enough in doing so and this

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reduces, for example, the numbers gaining higher grades at GCSE. Homework plays a useful role in some classes, but its inconsistent use prevents students from fully developing their independent working and research skills. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in additional small-group sessions, such as those in the learning support centre to aid basic literacy skills. Additional adult support in other lessons enables them to make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, but adults tend to do too much for these students, reducing the challenge for them to think for themselves.

Teachers have appropriate expectations of students' learning in lessons. Most have good subject knowledge, as shown when giving demonstrations and dealing with students' questions. They manage resources well, including computers and practical equipment. Teachers make satisfactory use of information about students' differing attainment and targets when planning lessons. However, students are typically expected to do different amounts of the same work, or work with varied levels of support, rather than having tasks tailored to their abilities. Teachers sometimes target questions in relation to students' attainment so as to challenge them, but this too is not routine practice so as to fully extend students' thinking. Lessons often include discussions at the start and as the work proceeds. These are useful where the objectives for learning are clarified so that students know what they are trying to achieve. When this happens they build confidence in assessing their own progress and deciding how to improve their work. However, this is not consistent enough to secure good progress in all lessons, and where discussions go on too long, students become restless. Additional adults are deployed at appropriate times to help students with additional learning needs. They keep students engaged effectively but do not always know enough about how to help students develop independent learning skills. Some opportunities to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills are exploited well in lessons other than mathematics and English. However, some opportunities are also missed, for example to develop recording skills in noting key words in discussions. Marking is regular in most books. Some teachers make explicit and useful reference to students' targets and expect them to respond to marking. The impact is mixed because these expectations are not reinforced consistently across the school.

The school environment is usually calm and orderly. Most students arrive punctually to lessons and their behaviour makes a satisfactory contribution to their learning. They enjoy learning in separate boys' and girls' groups, but older students also like the mixed classes. They cooperate with teachers by mainly following expected rules. Students have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. The school community is harmonious with students displaying satisfactory social and moral development. They are welcoming to visitors and ready to engage in discussion. Students take advantage of the satisfactory range of opportunities for them to reflect on spiritual issues, as seen in an assembly, but these are not systematically developed in all lessons. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school through activities such as peer mentoring by older students and charity fundraising. A good range of links have been developed with the local community, including music and drama performances. However, there

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are limited opportunities for students to learn about cultural diversity by linking with communities further afield.

The school takes effective steps to support students who have difficulty managing their own behaviour, so exclusions are low. These steps include individual and small-group sessions and work with external agencies such as social services. Good use is made of external provision, such as in a local authority unit to offer an alternative curriculum and behaviour support for the students whose circumstances may make them most vulnerable. A wide range of actions are taken to improve attendance and these are bringing improvement, but the school knows that it has not yet resolved this deep-seated problem. Staff work closely with families, especially of older students, to improve their attendance as they approach the end of their courses. However, some opportunities are missed to intervene when students are younger so as to establish good habits early on. Staff go to considerable lengths to provide nurture provision at break and lunchtimes and students value the discussion and 'friendship' groups offered. There is some bullying, mainly associated with low-level name calling. It is usually dealt with well by the school and students say they are confident to talk to staff, including additional adults, if they have any concerns.

The headteacher and his senior colleagues show determination to build on what has been achieved so far. Their concerted focus on improving teaching is evident in better provision in mathematics and English. They know that some of the measures taken, such as additional teaching sessions, are short-term remedies for past underachievement and that good day-to-day teaching is the ultimate goal. Judicious use is made of external expertise. For example, a consultant is helping to improve the assessment and tracking of students' progress across all subjects. Monitoring involves a satisfactory range of lesson observation and data analysis and gives senior leaders a broadly accurate picture of the school's provision. They take satisfactory measures to promote equal opportunities for all groups of students, evident in raising attainment for boys with special educational needs and/or disabilities. School action plans are ambitious for further gains but are not always explicit enough about the impact expected from different initiatives so their effectiveness can be checked. The governing body monitors the school's work reasonably well. It provided good support during the transition to Trust status and continues to do so during the move onto a single site. Communication with staff is effective and visits are regular, but the lack of clarity in some areas of the school's planning documents undermines the governing body's ability to hold it fully to account.

Subject leadership is satisfactory and developing. It is effective in mathematics and English because of the close focus on these subjects and much collaborative work between the subject leaders and senior staff. Other subject leaders also benefit from working alongside senior staff to monitor their areas. However, the assessment data available to them are not as comprehensive as in mathematics and English, and they are not as systematic in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching. The school takes satisfactory steps to communicate with parents and carers in reports about their children's progress and information in newsletters and the website. However, some parents and carers want to know more about what their children are learning

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and how they can support them. Sensible curriculum adjustments are made to meet students' needs. These include additional lessons where needed for English and mathematics, a wide range of vocational courses in school and at college, early entry to GCSEs for more-able students, and innovative projects such as designing the school uniform with designers from Creative Partnerships. Humanities is underdeveloped as a feature of the curriculum, with students not viewing it as at the core of the school's identity. Safeguarding procedures are secure. Procedures for child protection, staff training and site security are regularly reviewed and updated.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Ellington and Hereson School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 781 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	21	39	26	48	6	11	1	2
Q2 My child feels safe at school	24	44	26	48	2	4	2	4
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	26	48	15	28	9	17	2	4
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	25	46	19	35	7	13	1	2
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	24	44	26	48	2	4	1	2
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	25	46	20	37	5	9	2	4
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	12	22	24	44	10	19	4	7
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	12	22	17	31	15	28	7	13
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	21	39	17	31	7	13	3	6
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	31	21	39	15	28	1	2
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	20	37	16	30	10	19	5	9
Q12 The school is well led and managed	22	41	17	31	7	13	3	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the achievement of all pupils</li> <li>■ behaviour and safety</li> <li>■ the quality of teaching</li> <li>■ the effectiveness of leadership and management</li> </ul> <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

24 June 2011

Dear Students



### **Inspection of The Ellington and Hereson School, Ramsgate CT12 6RH**

Thank you for your help in the recent inspection and for giving us your views. Your school is satisfactory overall. It has gone through a period of great change in the last two years but is now stable and ready to move on.

- Standards in key subjects are below average overall at the end of Year 11, but they are rising. In vocational subjects, standards are above average.
- The school carefully checks your progress towards good exam results, particularly in GCSE mathematics and English, so that more of you are getting higher grades.
- You make satisfactory progress in lessons but sometimes the work is too easy for some and too hard for others, and you are not always helped enough to think for yourselves about how to improve. Homework is not set regularly enough to help you work independently.
- Most of you enjoy school and feel safe. However, while many of you attend well, a small minority regularly miss school. Behaviour is satisfactory. There is some bullying but you told us that it is usually dealt with well by staff.
- The headteacher and staff have high expectations for the school. They have many ideas about what needs improving, but their plans are not always clear about the purpose of the steps planned or how they will check the difference made. Staff who lead subjects are keen to make sure you do well but are not all equally effective in doing so, so that progress varies between subjects.

I have asked the headteacher to include the following in his plans for improvement.

- Ensure lessons are planned to help you all make good progress and take responsibility for your learning, and that homework is set to help you develop your independent learning skills.
- Work more effectively with your parents and carers to make sure that everyone attends well and that they can support your learning.
- Make sure the actions planned by school leaders to improve the school have clearly measurable goals so their impact can be checked, and ensure all subject leaders make an equally good impact on their areas.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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