

# Epsom and Ewell High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	137595
<b>Inspection number</b>	388186
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Samantha Morgan-Price HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	797
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Richardson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alex Russell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>School address</b>	Ruxley Lane West Ewell Epsom KT19 9JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8974 0400
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8974 0401
<b>Email address</b>	School@eehs.surrey.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Samantha Morgan-Price

Her Majesty's Inspector

Desmond Dunne

Additional Inspector

Karen Roche

Additional Inspector

Wendy Walters

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 39 lessons in which 38 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the School Improvement Partner, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at many documents, including the school improvement plan, the self-evaluation document, records of lesson observations, and achievement and attainment data. The inspection team also scrutinised questionnaire returns from 43 parents and carers, 192 students and 32 staff.

## Information about the school

The school became an academy in September 2011. It is smaller than average for a secondary school and serves students mainly from the local community. It has an expanding sixth form. An above average proportion of students join or leave the academy part way through the school year. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An average proportion of students are from minority ethnic heritages. There is a larger-than-average proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.

The academy has a specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. This has three places for deaf students. The proportion of students who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. This includes the deaf students, those who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and those who have specific and moderate learning difficulties. The predecessor school was removed from special measures in March 2010. As the predecessor school, it exceeded the government's 2011 floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

**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>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school that has undergone a transformational journey in the last three years. The amazing vision of the headteacher has created a culture where staff and students alike believe they can achieve outstandingly well. The academy is not yet outstanding as students on AS and A-level programmes do not always achieve the high grades expected of them, and because there are a few GCSE subjects where standards are not rising as rapidly as the best.
- Achievement has risen steeply since 2009. The academy's data show it is improving further. Students make good progress in their lessons with outstanding progress in English. Students in the hearing resource base also progress well.
- Teaching is good. Generally, the pace in lessons is fast and work is challenging, enabling students to learn well, but it sometimes slows, for example when work is not fine tuned to allow all students to do their best. The quality of marking is high in English, but in some other subjects does not give students enough guidance.
- Behaviour is exemplary; this is demonstrated in the very few exclusions over the last two years. Attendance is rising. Students hold staff in high regard. They treat each other with the utmost courtesy and respect. They have good opportunities to speak to leaders and staff if there are any concerns.
- Performance is led and managed exceptionally well. High expectations and the phrase 'what more can we do' are the bedrock of the academy. Good professional development and the highly effective data analysis by leaders have made a strong contribution to the rise in achievement, especially in English and mathematics.
- The sixth form is good and improving. Achievement fell in 2011. However, effective leadership actions have enabled the academy to improve it significantly this year.

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

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

- Improve achievement in the sixth form so that more students gain the high grades expected of them, and bring the weaker performing GCSEs up to the standard of the best by ensuring:
  - teachers plan and deliver lessons with high pace and challenge so that they meet the full range of students' needs and abilities
  - all teachers mark work to the standard of the best, providing regular written evaluation of how well students are attaining and what they need to do to improve their performance.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Students enter Year 7 with levels of attainment that are below average. They make good progress to attain standards that are above average at GCSE. Students' attainment at GCSE in English is high; students make outstanding progress in this subject. In the sixth form, the good progress that students make enables them to achieve well and standards are rising again after a lower performing year in 2011. However, a few students are not yet fully on track to reach the high grades expected of them. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. Students for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. In 2011, more able students did not make the same progress as others. The academy has narrowed the gap by providing more challenging curriculum opportunities such as triple science. English and mathematics are predicted an increase in the proportion of students attaining grades A\* and A, which has been partly achieved by teachers providing more rigorous tasks. However, GCSE achievement in design technology, religious studies and French has lagged that of other subjects. The academy is aware of this and is working to improve.

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire unanimously say that their child is developing skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics and that they are making good progress at school. Literacy skills are high by the time students leave. Students respond well when teachers use key words to develop students' subject specific vocabulary. Lessons typically allow for students to self-evaluate their own learning and in a growing number of lessons those who have made the best progress are tasked with explaining the learning activities to those who have not understood as well. This enables them to consolidate their learning. However, in a few lessons learning slows when students listen to teachers talking for too long, rather than moving to more active involvement.

### **Quality of teaching**

The level of questioning by most teachers is sharp and results in students making good progress in lessons. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to good effect to deepen students' understanding. In the strongest lessons, students are given a platform to ask enquiring questions. Teachers respond to these

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well so it moves learning on quickly. For example, students in a mathematics lessons were able to quickly resolve answers for quite complex tasks by the teacher expertly using modelling. The teacher provided a good environment for students to take risks and make suggestions even though they may have been wrong. Teaching and support for students in the hearing resource base are also good. There is good learning support in lessons for students who join the academy with language needs. There is a good mixture of discrete support and targeted support in lessons. Students' social development is extremely good as teachers plan lessons that involve extensive group and paired work, this also strengthens their levels of oracy. Supported by the tutorials and assemblies, students have a strong sense of right and wrong which is evident from their outstanding behaviour.

Teachers usually set work that is challenging for all abilities in the class. Occasionally the work is not so well tuned to push every student on, either in the sixth form or in the main school, so a few students can mark time. Throughout the academy there is a wide variation in the quality of marked work. The standard of marked work in English is high. In other subjects students do not always receive such regular written evaluation of how well they are attaining and what they need to do to improve their performance. This inhibits the understanding of students of what they need to do to improve.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The highly effective leadership actions have resulted in the level of exclusions decreasing dramatically over the last two years. Attendance continues to rise. The headteacher and senior leadership team are highly visible and students are clear that they are known by name. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say behaviour is good. Students are caring and supportive of each other. There are no prohibited areas in the academy and they take pride in keeping their school clean and tidy. Students themselves make an excellent contribution to lessons through their very positive attitudes to learning.

Students say they feel extremely safe at school, including those in the hearing resource base. They know that they can share their concerns with staff. The work of the student support unit contributes well to their sense of well-being. A student stated, 'I am quite defensive of my school because it has improved so much. We have a better reputation in the community now.' Students and the parents and carers who responded say bullying is rare; there have been two racist incidents since September 2010. When, very rarely, bullying of any type or other incidents do occur students are confident that they will be dealt with well.

### **Leadership and management**

Since the last inspection, the highly successful leadership team has engendered throughout the academy a culture of care and high expectations. The determination for excellence in everything the academy does has resulted in rapid improvements to

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students' attainment. Self-evaluation, especially the headteacher's reports to the governing body, is extremely rigorous. Leaders know the academy extremely well which has enabled them to make rapid changes and to implement the appropriate interventions when required. The rises in attainment, attendance and the improvements to the sixth form provision enable leaders to demonstrate the academy has an excellent capacity to improve.

The governing body provide a sharp, critical eye to the performance of school leaders. Governors have an excellent awareness of the academy's areas for improvement and scrutinise actions taken to improve attainment well, they are also proud of the gains the academy has made. The rigorous attention to improving teaching and effective professional development, including coaching by leaders, has resulted in the increase in the proportion of outstanding lessons and the reduction of teaching that is no better than satisfactory. Good attention has been paid to marking for literacy in lessons. Recent actions by the school leaders have included a sharper focus on closing the gap between the exemplary performance of English and the good performance in mathematics. Close tracking of performance and rapid action when needed enable the academy to promote equality of opportunities well. The procedures for safeguarding the well-being of students are robust and fulfil statutory requirements.

The curriculum is good because it is broad and balanced and has been strengthened by the additional pathways for students, especially the more able. It is not outstanding because aspects are still under development. The promotion of students' social and moral understanding is better than the spiritual and cultural aspects. The developing curriculum options in the sixth form are providing appropriate choices. The language options in the main school develop students' appreciation of other cultures and there is increasing exposure to discussions about living in a multi-cultural society. The innovative proposal to create an 'Immersion' curriculum is intended to enable a small number of more able Year 8 students to be taught in French for a range of other subjects.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**

18 May 2012

Dear Students



### **Inspection of Epsom and Ewell High School, West Ewell KT19 9JW**

We would like to thank you for helping us when we came to find out how well you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons, reading your questionnaires and talking to you. I am writing to let you know what we thought about the academy. We judged that your school is good in most respects and that the headteacher, the senior teachers, governing body and other staff are working extremely well to improve the quality of education that you receive.

You achieve well throughout the academy, including students in the sixth form. Attainment in your GCSE examinations last year was the highest it has ever been and is set to improve further this summer. Attainment in the sixth form is also set to rise. The academy has created a harmonious atmosphere and your senior teachers have done extremely well to achieve this. The vast majority of you feel safe at school. Your behaviour at school is excellent and your attendance is above average. The majority of you said that behaviour was good most of the time in lessons and around the academy; we judged it to be better than that.

There are some things that the academy can improve upon to help all you achieve even better. These are things we have asked leaders and managers to do.

- Improve achievement in AS and A levels and in GCSE subjects where results are not so high by making sure:
  - teachers give you work that is always challenging enough, and get you doing things quickly in lessons rather than occasionally listening for too long
  - teachers' marking always tells you how well you are attaining and what you need to do to improve.

All of you can help by reading marking carefully and acting on the suggestions, and by contributing to your lessons at all times.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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