

The King Edmund School

Vaughan Close, Rochford, SS4 1TL

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- After a period of decline, students' achievement is now improving, but at different rates in different subjects. This is because teaching is variable in quality across subjects.
- The best teachers ensure that the work different students do is precisely matched to their ability and potential. However, too many teachers teach only to the middle range and do not plan lessons using the information they have about individual students' abilities.
- Often, marking does not provide students with information on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Students join the school with low levels of literacy. The school improves these basic skills but not quickly enough to ensure good progress across all subjects.
- At Key Stage 3, particularly in science, all the skills and knowledge that students need to make good progress, and be well prepared for Key Stage 4, are not covered.
- Leaders and managers have the right priorities and teaching has shown some improvement. However, they do not make best use of the information they have about students to set targets for students and the school, and plan actions to bring about consistently good performance.
- The sixth form requires further improvement. Though teaching is better than in the rest of the school, progress is not good for significant groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching has improved in a number of subjects, including English, so that pupils are better prepared than they were for national exams.
- Pupils achieve well in work-related qualifications.
- Students' attitudes are mainly positive. Their behaviour is good, as are the relationships between students and between students and staff.
- The school takes an active part in a partnership of 28 schools, providing care, guidance and support for students. As a result, some students most at risk of underachieving make excellent progress.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Parents are highly supportive of the improvements being made.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 52 lessons or part lessons. Sixteen lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders and managers.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff, members of the delivery team of the Rochford District School's partnership Trust and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents on self-evaluation and safeguarding. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress.
- Inspectors considered the 86 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and the questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Miranda Perry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sa'ad Khaldi	Additional Inspector
Beverly Dobson	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector
Sandra Teacher	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The King Edmund School is an above-average sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school uses alternative provision located at Great Wakering Primary School.
- The school is part of the Rochford District Schools Partnership Trust, and the team who deliver the Trust's extended services are based at the school.
- The King Edmund School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that lessons, including in the sixth form, are consistently good or better by:
 - using assessment information to plan learning activities that provide suitable challenge, more precisely matching the needs of all students
 - ensuring that teachers plan opportunities for students to practise and develop their literacy skills across all subjects in Key Stage 3
 - improving the quality of marking so that students know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Raise students' achievement, particularly in science, by providing a curriculum at Key Stage 3 which results in students making good progress and having the necessary knowledge and skills to make good progress at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that all leaders and managers, including in the sixth form, make best use of assessment information so that:
 - demanding targets are set for individuals and groups
 - targeted actions can be taken to improve students' performance so that it is good.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students start at this school with levels of attainment which are below average, particularly in communication skills. Improving teaching has increased students' progress in these basic skills but students' literacy skills are not well developed throughout all subjects at Key Stage 3.
- In 2012, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs grades A* to C including English and mathematics was below average.
- In English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 progress requires improvement. The curriculum, particularly in science, does not include the teaching of all the competencies required, such as the ability to apply learning in practical situations, to bring about good progress.
- In mathematics and science at Key Stage 4 students make the progress they should, although students in mathematics who attended additional small-group sessions and who were entered early for GCSE made good progress.
- Students have individual targets. When they exceed these, the school does not always use the information it has about students to set more demanding targets which encourage further progress.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires further improvement. Students' prior attainment is below average. Students taking work-related courses make good progress and results are improving at A level. However, this improvement is not fast enough in some subjects, for example, A-level psychology.
- Progress in English at Key Stage 4 is now good because students are improving their skills to succeed in exam conditions.
- Pupils are making good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 in physical education, art and expressive arts. High-quality performances and access to a large variety of sporting activities engage and motivate students.
- Pupils achieve well in work-related courses. All of the pupils in Year 11 have already passed national qualifications in construction, hair and beauty, and work-related science.
- The achievement of the few students studying part-time off site is excellent because the course is well tailored to their individual skills and interests.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is uneven. Results at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2012 indicated that their attainment in English and mathematics was about 20 months behind that of all other pupils in the school. The current attainment of pupils eligible for the funding is rising so that the gap between this group and other students is closing.
- The school monitors the use of additional funding made available through the pupil premium and the new Year 7 catch-up funding for students who failed to reach the national expectation in Year 6. Some younger students are now making improved progress in their reading as a result of a Key Stage 3 reading programme. Pupils at risk of underachievement in Year 11 have benefited from the additional funding to help them attend a range of sessions and reach their potential at GCSE.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as their peers.

Rochford District Schools Partnership Trust employs a range of specialists in special educational needs so that students who have problems with, for example, speech and language, can be helped quickly and effectively.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although there is an increasing proportion of teaching that is outstanding and good, there is still too much that requires improvement and there is some that is inadequate. Most of the best teaching is in expressive arts, physical education, art and work-related learning. Teaching is improving, particularly in English and humanities, but is not yet consistently good. Teaching is weakest in science.
- In some lessons, for example art, marking makes it clear to students what they have done well and what they need to do better. In the majority of lessons, marking does not greatly improve progress because comments are often too vague and brief to be helpful.
- In lessons when students are all given the same work to do, regardless of their different abilities, they do not all make good progress. In these cases, teachers have not planned the lesson to take into account students' varying levels of knowledge and skills.
- Opportunities in lessons for students to develop their skills in speaking, reading and writing are sometimes missed, and basic spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes go uncorrected.
- Although teaching in the sixth form is stronger than elsewhere in the school and literacy is better catered for, there are some lessons where students are given the same activity to do, despite the range of abilities in the class.
- In the best lessons, students are interested because of a fast pace and the use of exciting materials. Their knowledge is deepened because they are asked thought-provoking questions. For example, a Year 8 class were engaged in considering whether David Beckham was a moral man because he gave to charity.
- When students make good progress, teachers have high expectations. In a Year 10 dance lesson, for example, students were expected to improve their technical ability in a dance routine to a professional standard.
- There are good examples of teachers effectively modelling for students how to overcome misunderstandings. In a Year 12 mathematics lesson, the teacher showed on the board where students most often got stuck on a formula, and then worked through how to move forward. One student said, 'That was my mistake. I now know why I made it, and I won't make it again.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The positive promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been a key factor in improving behaviour. Students talk confidently about the importance of mutual respect, and everyone's right to be able to learn well.
- The school has a very good record of improving the behaviour of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to behave well. For example, the school's participation in the Rochford District Schools

Partnership gives the school access to organisations which can address issues at home that might be the cause of students' poor behaviour.

- Parents, students and staff feel that The King Edmund School is a very safe place to be. The school benefits from a wide range of facilities, such as a swimming pool and a hair and beauty salon, and students have a good understanding of how to use these facilities safely.
- The behaviour of students who attend the alternative provision at a local primary school is excellent. Students previously at risk of exclusion now role model good behaviour. One student said, 'I would not be here if it was not for this programme.'
- In the sixth form, pupils take their learning seriously because they take responsibility for behaving well. They use their study time effectively and stay on task even when they are unsupervised.
- Attendance has improved, particularly in the sixth form. Students respond positively to awards for good punctuality and attendance.
- In a few lessons, when teaching is not good, students are inattentive and not always on task.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers know the students as individuals and collect a lot of information about their performance. They do not organise and analyse this information so that they can quickly identify declining trends for groups of students and take action which brings about improvement.
 - A new focus on teaching and learning in whole-school improvement planning has resulted in better teaching. The plan contains targets for the improvement of achievement, but the targets are not demanding enough because they are not based on a thorough analysis of what the school knows about its students.
 - The local authority has worked with subject and department leaders so that they understand how to bring about good and outstanding progress within a lesson. Subject and department leaders have now started developing their teams of staff so that progress is improving. Staff teams are not yet bringing about good progress for all students in their classes because they are not using what they know about students' prior performance to inform their planning.
 - The Key Stage 3 curriculum does not develop students' understanding in a way that best prepares them for success at Key Stage 4. Students enjoy a range of subjects at Key Stage 4 and 5. The school has had some success in trialling different qualifications at Key Stages 4 and 5, particularly in the area of work-related learning, to find courses which match students' needs and interests.
 - The checking of teaching has improved so that leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. They provide training which tackles teachers' areas for development. The school rewards good teachers through pay progression and takes decisive action if any teacher fails to meet expected standards.
 - Staff are committed to improving the school, and leaders and managers have their full
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confidence. Pupils recognise that the school is getting better, and parents are generally very supportive of the changes being made at the school.

- The school has good relationships with parents. Ex-pupils come to teach at the school, and successive generations of families attend the school. The school recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of its predecessor school. This event was very popular within the local community.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body supports the school well and it rightly judges that the school is improving. Governors have greatly appreciated the increased access they now have to information about the quality of teaching and learning, and how well the pupils are achieving, and they have benefitted from recent training on how to interpret the information they receive. They now understand how well the school is performing compared to other schools, and are ambitious for greater improvement.
 - The governors have supported the headteacher to take effective action if staff are underperforming. They work together with an external advisor to make sure that they set the headteacher demanding targets to bring about continued improvement.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136868
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	412764
Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1573
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Thorn
Headteacher	Jonathan Osborn
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01702 545771
Fax number	01702 549 662
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