

Hedingham School and Sixth Form

Yeldham Road, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, CO9 3QH

Inspection dates 2–3 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Students make good progress and achieve well, particularly in English. Their attainment by the time they leave school is often above average.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively when questioning students to make sure they make good progress.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and is clearly evident in the life of the school.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. They conduct themselves with courtesy and show generosity towards others. Students feel completely safe within the school.
- The governing body, headteacher and senior team have helped to raise students' achievement through improved teaching. Staff morale is high.
- The school enjoys excellent relationships with parents, carers and the community.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well taught and achieve well.
- Additional funding is used very well to support individual students' needs and raise their aspirations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching and the proportion of students making outstanding progress is not yet high enough in some subjects.
- Performance information is not always used consistently by teachers to set work at the right level for all students.
- The marking of students' work does not consistently tell students what they need to do to move their learning on.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 45 lessons of which three were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors heard students read in reading recovery groups.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and attended an assembly. They scrutinised students' work, records relating to behaviour and attendance, the impact of professional development on the school's performance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and staff and students.
- Inspectors took account of the 101 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaire responses from 41 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors scrutinised the arrangements and records kept to safeguard students.
- Inspectors looked at the school's development plan and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data that teachers use to monitor students' progress.

Inspection team

Linda Austin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
Concetta Caruana	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school with a sixth form on site.
- The vast majority of students in the school come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much lower than in other schools.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is small.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the governments' floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There are no students attending alternative provision
- The school converted to become an academy school in January 2013. When its predecessor school, Hedingham School and Sixth Form, was last inspected, it was judged to be satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that students achieve even higher standards by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use the information they have about students' achievement to plan activities which are set at the right level for them
 - marking consistently identifies students' next steps in learning and requires students to act upon teachers' advice
 - the most effective practice already in the school is shared more widely.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with average standards. As a result of good teaching, most make good progress so that they are prepared well for the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Students' achievement has improved and the proportion gaining five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics is now consistently above the national average. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is also above the national average.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because the proportion of students who make exceptional progress over time in a number of subjects including mathematics is not consistently high.
- The school checks students' progress regularly and takes prompt action if the student is not making the expected rate of progress. The school's information indicates that well-targeted intervention and support generally help these students to make up gaps in their knowledge and understanding quickly.
- The progress of individual students is checked effectively to make sure that the needs of particular groups are met. Consequently, there is little variation in achievement of different groups, including girls, boys, students from minority ethnic backgrounds and students who speak English as an additional language.
- Students speak warmly of the extra help that teachers give in revision classes and intervention sessions. The school has introduced additional support for students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including the employment of additional English and mathematics teachers. Consequently, these students are making good progress and achieve well.
- In 2012, students eligible for the pupil premium were approximately two terms behind their peers in English and 3 terms behind them in mathematics. This was a significant improvement since the previous year, confirming that the gap between those eligible for the pupil premium funding and those who are not is closing rapidly.
- Progress made by pupils targeted for the Year 7 catch-up programme is good.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of educational needs, make good progress from their starting points because of the range of support they are given.
- Achievement in the sixth form continues to improve. Students make good progress and the school is addressing variations between subjects at AS level. The sixth form provides courses that are well suited to the needs of learners.
- Early entry to examinations in English has improved students' achievements, especially those who are most able.
- Good attention is given to developing students' literacy skills. Literacy is developed well during lessons and tutor time, including the use of technical vocabulary, and additional support is given to students whose skills are below that expected. Numeracy skills have yet to be developed in a systematic way across all subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across most subjects is usually good and in some cases outstanding. There are still some variations, however, and not all teaching is at the level of the very best to make sure that all students make rapid and sustained progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and effective questioning to challenge students and to deepen their learning. Students are enthusiastic about their learning and answer questions willingly and with confidence.
- The best lessons also contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In one Year 9 history lesson, students were inspired to write tweets about their imagined experiences in the Second World War. In a Year 9 geography lesson, excellent links were made with the current disaster in Bangladesh in a discussion about ethics.
- Students' benefit from the support of additional teachers and teaching assistants. These adults develop the learning of individuals or small groups because students are able to ask questions about aspects of the lesson they do not understand and are helped to develop their perseverance.
- Good relationships between adults and students contribute to a positive climate for learning in the school. This supports a safe environment where students are confident about sharing their ideas and taking risks. For example, in a physical education rounders lesson, students were asked by other students to improve the response of fielders by hitting the ball to different areas of the pitch.
- Not all planned activities are so well matched to meet students' needs, particularly for lower and higher ability students. The data about current students' progress is not always taken into account in planning lessons.
- In most lessons, teachers make sure that students know well what they need to do to be successful. For example, in a GCSE German lesson, all students knew what they had to do to achieve an A*. Most teachers mark students' work regularly. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent across the school and teachers' comments do not always help students to know how to improve their work.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students are very positive about the quality of teaching in the sixth form as well as the opportunities for self and peer-assessment. In a very few cases, the teacher talked for too long and did not encourage the students to think for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students are exceptionally well behaved in and out of classrooms. In lessons and other activities, such as assemblies, behaviour is highly respectful and orderly. Changes in activity within and between lessons are calm and show excellent self-control and discipline. All students are therefore able to learn throughout the lessons.
- Behaviour around the school, in corridors, and at break and lunchtime, is exemplary. Students are always friendly, courteous and helpful. This creates a safe and harmonious environment.
- Relationships between staff and students are warm and respectful. This ensures that students

feel safe at school. They know that staff are there to help and support them as much as they can.

- Incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are very rare and, when they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students are well aware of the dangers of bullying in all its forms. They say that there is very little prejudice-based bullying or derogatory language. Parents say that they are very happy with behaviour in the school and would recommend the school to other parents.
- Attendance is above average and levels of exclusion are very low. Students are punctual to school, which prepares them well for working life. Punctuality to lessons is excellent, showing students' commitment to learning by moving quickly around the site.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders as well as leaders of subjects and houses share a strong commitment to driving up standards and to provide a secure foundation for students' future wellbeing.
- The headteacher provides decisive, resilient and determined leadership. He is passionately committed to the needs of the students and local community, and is ably supported by the senior leadership team.
- Teachers' annual performance targets are monitored closely and pay awards are directly linked to the quality of teaching and students' progress. This is having a positive impact on students' achievement.
- The quality of teachers' work is systematically checked, both formally and informally. Senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects and aspects of the school's work undertake formal observations of their teams. Strengths and weaknesses of aspects of teaching for individual members of staff are recorded. Any practice not judged as being good is targeted and dealt with through training, but the examples of best practice in the school are not shared as widely as they could be.
- The priorities in the school development plan are communicated clearly. Leaders know the school's strengths and what can be improved based on regular evaluation of its work.
- The support provided by the local authority has been purposeful and effective in assisting the school to raise attainment and expectations.
- Students thoroughly enjoy the wide range of visits and opportunities for travel; for example, field trips and visits to Europe, which help their GCSE study and wider understanding of the world.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development lies at the heart of the school's work. A wide range of activities all help to make sure that the students have an enriching school experience; for example, charity work, topics on respecting cultural diversity, assemblies on teamwork and aspiration, anti-bullying days, and a range of after school activities and clubs.
- There is no discrimination within the school and the closing of gaps in attainment between groups of students demonstrates the success of the school in ensuring equal opportunities.

- Partnerships with local primary schools and other educational and business organisations, for example Barclays Bank, are a key strength of the school and enhance students' learning.

- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development and accurately judges all aspects of the school's work. The governing body has set up specific committees to critically analyse students' results, assess whether the quality of teaching is improving and make sure that targets for teachers reward good and deal with poor performance. Senior leaders make sure that the governing body is well informed about students' attainment and progress when compared to schools nationally, which enables the governors to be able to challenge the school to improve further. Governors monitor the use of the pupil premium carefully to ensure that it has the maximum benefit for the students who are eligible for it. Governors have a firm grip on the school's budget and plan carefully to ensure financial sustainability. Governors attend training to ensure that they are well informed about current local and national initiatives. Governors make sure that procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students meet requirements.

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	139153
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	418375

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1117
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miles Scrivens
Headteacher	John Panayi
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01787 460470
Fax number	01787 462652
Email address	admin@hedingham.essex.sch.uk

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