

# King Ethelbert School Academy

Canterbury Road, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9BL

**Inspection dates** 11–12 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- There is no established pattern of students making progress from their starting points that compares favourably with the national averages.
- Students in receipt of the pupil premium funding (the extra funding for particular groups of students) have yet to fully close the gap in their attainment against that of their peers.
- The quality of teaching varies too much. Teachers do not always plan work at the right level of difficulty for individual students or with the right amount of support for reading and writing. As a result, some students do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders do not routinely monitor those students who make good progress.
- While there is evidence of recent improvements, the actions of leaders and managers, including governors, have not had sufficient impact to ensure that the quality of teaching is good and students achieve consistently well.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have created a demanding and supportive climate in school. Staff morale is high.
- Students behave well. They feel safe in school, largely due to the good quality care and support offered by staff.
- Leaders have successfully improved students' attendance and the number of exclusions has dropped.
- The school works well with its partner school in a federation and the partnership has clear benefits for students.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons as part of themed 'learning walks' around the school. They also attended tutorial sessions.
- Three groups of students met with inspectors. One group read to an inspector. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior and middle leaders and newly qualified teachers. Two meetings were held with governors, including a meeting with the Vice Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and of 40 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors read a range of documents. These included information on the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, data relating to students' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised students' books.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 11 were on study leave in preparation for GCSE examinations, Year 10 had a morning of examinations and Year 8 had a school day trip.

## Inspection team

Liz Duffy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Veronica Young	Additional Inspector
Jalil Shaikh	Additional Inspector
Paula Sargent	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- King Ethelbert School Academy is smaller than the average-sized school.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. This is additional support for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services. No students from service families currently attend the school.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE mathematics and GCSE English and this year students were examined for IGCSE English in Year 10 and Year 11.
- There is some alternative curriculum provision for a few students in The Skills Studio which provides vocational courses in construction, motor vehicle maintenance, business and retail and engineering.
- The school has been federated with a nearby secondary school since January 2009 and shares the same governing body. Through the partnership, King Ethelbert is also delivering post-16 courses.
- King Ethelbert converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2011. When its predecessor school, King Ethelbert School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is in receipt of a number of awards, including International School Award, Artsmark Gold, Eco Bronze and has Healthy School status.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring teachers plan work at the right level for students with different levels of ability, with sufficient challenge for the more able
  - improving teachers' understanding of how to support weaker readers so they make more rapid improvement in their reading, by breaking down difficult texts and providing easier resources for students where necessary
  - ensuring students are clear, and are supported when necessary, on how to complete the tasks they are given
  - providing more explicit and detailed guidance in their marking on how students can improve their work.
- Raise achievement so more students make the expected progress in mathematics and English, including those students in receipt of pupil premium funding, by:
  - giving students more opportunities to revisit previous learning
  - providing more opportunities for students to practise their basic literacy and numeracy skills, including opportunities to write at length, across different subjects
  - consistently indicating to students, spelling and punctuation errors and providing them with better strategies to spot errors in their own work.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of the school's leadership by:
  - sharpening the monitoring of data on students' progress for all subjects
  - ensuring that the checks made on the quality of teaching take full account of students' progress over time
  - equipping middle leaders to robustly challenge weaker teaching in their areas
  - ensuring that governors find out more about the school for themselves so are better able to hold the school to account and learn more about the impact of pupil premium spending.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When students join the school in Year 7, their attainment is generally well below average. Their progress varies across different subjects and in year groups. By the end of Year 11, students' overall attainment remains below average. Results in 2012 were not as high as predicted in English due to a change in pass marks for grades nationally. In both 2011 and 2012, the proportion of students making the expected progress in English was below average; similarly, the proportion making the expected progress in mathematics was below average.
- Some students are entered early for their GCSE examinations and results so far indicate a promising improvement for 2013. A much higher percentage of students is predicted to attain higher grades than previously, both in English and mathematics. These predictions are based on external examination units and moderated coursework. Students are not excluded from attaining the highest grades, as they are able to re-sit examinations.
- The achievement of all groups, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, requires improvement. Last year some students with special educational needs did not make as much progress as they should have. Now, their progress has improved substantially and for many, especially in Year 7 and Year 8, it is good, due to the support they receive.
- The school has used its additional funding through the pupil premium to provide one-to-one tuition and group support for literacy and numeracy for eligible students. This has made an impact. In 2011, eligible students, including those entitled to free school meals, achieved on average a grade lower than their peers in mathematics and half a grade lower in English. In 2012, eligible students performed almost in line with their peers. Currently the performance of students in Years 9 and 10 indicates that the closure of the gap in attainment between this group and their peers is not yet secure.
- There is some emerging evidence that the Year 7 'Catch Up' programme is starting to have an impact for eligible students. The few students in the off-site alternative provision achieve in line with their peers.
- Literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) are being incorporated increasingly well into lessons. However, the reading and writing skills of some students require improvement.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching observed ranged from outstanding to inadequate. While the majority was good or better, a substantial proportion was not at least good. Inspection evidence and students' progress over time indicate that the school's view, in evaluating teaching as outstanding, is inaccurate and overly generous.
- Weaker teaching did not cater well for students of different ability. In some lessons, teachers were not clear about how students could succeed with a task or there was a lack of support to enable them to complete the task. In some lessons, there was not enough challenge for the more able.
- In the best lessons, students are actively engaged and the work is well matched to their needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations and enthusiasm for what they are teaching. They create a positive climate where students are keen to be successful. For example, in a science lesson, students responded well to the mission of 'surviving the zombie apocalypse' through devising experiments for survival. Groups of students had different tasks and resources which were well suited to their different abilities. As a result, all achieved well and felt supported in their learning.

- Teachers have responded positively to the school's drive to improve students' language, communication and mathematical skills. However, they do not always give sufficient attention to developing students' writing skills and they provide too few opportunities for extended writing and sometimes fail to correct poor spelling or grammar. Some teachers lack understanding of how to support weak readers. They do not, for example, break down difficult texts and provide easier resources for students where necessary.
- Most teachers mark students' work, but some marking does not provide enough guidance to help students make better progress with their learning.
- Students know their targets and are clear about what they need to do to reach them.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Teachers and teaching assistants develop very positive relationships with their students. These enhance students' moral and social development. Students have a positive attitude to learning which is shown in their work and the purposeful approach they take to lessons. In lessons which are not good, some students are occasionally bored and chat too much off task.
- The academy's pastoral system and mentoring of individual students who display challenging behaviour have helped to reduce both the number of exclusions and the number of referrals to senior staff.
- Students feel safe in the school and all those that inspectors met with said that they had someone they could go to if they had concerns. Students understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and they have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe from these. They say that bullying is rare and when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly. All parents who expressed a view agreed that bullying was dealt with effectively and that the school makes sure that its students are well behaved.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has reduced.
- Promoting the 'student voice' and listening to students' opinions are strengths of the school. A variety of opportunities are given for students to contribute to school life through the school council and through a programme of Lead Learners where students take a role in leading learning in lessons. The school places a high degree of trust in its students and they respond well to this approach. Students feel valued.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- While the school judges leadership and management to be outstanding, inspectors judge them to require improvement because leaders have yet to secure a track record of good achievement for students or a trend of improving examination results. The school's evaluation of its own performance takes insufficient account of the progress of students over time and is linked to the quality of teaching.
- Leaders at all levels demonstrate ambition for the school and share the common purpose of ensuring their students do well. Leaders are held in high esteem by staff who are proud to work at the school. One member of staff commented that it was a 'joy' to go to work every day.
- Senior leaders have recently developed improved systems for tracking students' progress. These emphasise the need for students to make at least the progress expected of them. They rightly recognise that the current schedule for assessments hinders leaders' ability to intervene sufficiently quickly in students' learning if they fall behind. They also see that the monitoring of students who are making good progress is patchy and so these students are not progressing as

rapidly as they could do.

- The school has well-organised systems for managing staff performance. All teachers have targets and meet with their appraisers to review progress against them. Some subject leaders lack the skills to challenge robustly weak performance in their areas.
  - The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables students to study a wide range of courses and gain qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4. A third of Year 10 students participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
  - The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through some lessons and through a comprehensive programme of clubs and activities. This provision is a strength and students enthusiastically engage in the wider life of the school; for example, a number of students are fundraising for an orphanage in India.
  - The school is inclusive but leaders have not yet achieved full equality of opportunity across all groups. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
  - All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met well.
  - The academy has demonstrated that it is capable of improving. Leaders have raised rates of attendance and improved behaviour. The quality of teaching is improving and leading to better progress for current students.
  - There are effective links across the federation. For example, King Ethelbert is delivering post-16 classes for the partnership school. Leaders believe the partnership has contributed to students' higher self-esteem and staff have benefited from sharing ideas and resources.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body have worked very hard at establishing a long-term partnership for the school. Governors have a diverse set of skills that match their roles and can interpret the evidence the school presents, which helps them to hold the school to account. Governors are asking many of the right questions, including about student progress and attainment. For example, they insisted on an action plan to address the 'disappointing' results of 2012. However, they rely too heavily on reports from the school and what they have been told rather than finding things out for themselves. They are not fully aware of areas where teaching is strongest and where further improvement is needed. Governors access training and support from a variety of providers. They understand the process used to manage performance, including pay progression procedures, and have supported leaders in addressing weak teaching. They understand how pupil premium funding has been spent but they are less clear on the impact of actions taken to support eligible students.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136584
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	412723

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	769
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Virginia Austin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Greig
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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