

St Edward's Church of England School and Sixth Form College

London Road, Romford, Essex, RM7 9NX

Inspection dates

5–6 November 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

- The most able students do not receive sufficient challenge in lessons to achieve the top grades by Year 11 and in the sixth form.
- There are gaps between the achievement of student groups. Students with special educational needs do not achieve as well as their peers and in some subjects boys and girls do not achieve comparably.
- The progress of students in English is not improving quickly enough. From their above average starting points, too few students are meeting or exceeding expectations in English nationally.
- The quality of teaching within and across departments is variable. Too little is consistently good.
- High quality marking and feedback are not consistent across the school.
- Leaders report how the pupil premium funding is used, but do not check closely enough how this supports better progress for those eligible for this funding.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Students' achievement across subjects varies.
- Leaders and governors are generous in their assessment of the school's effectiveness. Not all leaders have a detailed understanding of the rates of progress of different student groups as an indicator of the quality of teaching over time.

The school has the following strengths

- Students achieve very well in mathematics. Teaching is typically good in this subject.
- Behaviour is typically good and students feel safe.
- Attendance is above average and has been so for several years.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The academy is an inclusive community and pastoral support is excellent.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team conducted 49 observations of teaching across Key Stages 3 to 5, including 13 observations carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed tutor time and assemblies.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, groups of students and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised data about students' achievement, looked at students' books and records about the monitoring of teaching. They also reviewed development plans and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspection team reviewed 87 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the school's own survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Joanna Beckford-Hall, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector
Helen Roche	Additional Inspector
Gill Walley	Additional Inspector
Jason Wye	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Edward's Church of England School and Sixth Form is larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. The school converted to become an academy in 2011. When Ofsted last inspected the predecessor school, with the same name, it was judged to be a good school.
- The academy has specialist status for modern languages and science.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The percentage of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after and students with a parent in the armed services) is below the national average.
- Over 50% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below that found nationally.
- The academy does not have students in alternative education provision.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of consistently good and outstanding teaching in the main school and the sixth form by ensuring that all teachers:
 - raise expectations of what students can achieve, capitalising on students' good behaviour
 - plan lessons which significantly stretch the most able students and provide good support to students who need extra help
 - deepen students' subject knowledge through probing questioning and work that inspires them to want to learn more
 - mark students' work regularly and provide detailed feedback to all students so that they understand how to improve their work and are required to respond to the feedback.
- Quickly close the remaining gaps in achievement so that all students make good progress in lessons, over time and in all subjects, notably English.
- Improve the impact of the work of all leaders and governors by:
 - enabling all leaders to analyse data about student progress and use this data to devise school and subject improvement plans, with tight timescales and targets, to close remaining gaps in the achievement of different student groups
 - developing the effectiveness of all leaders to monitor and judge the impact of teachers' work in raising student achievement in lessons and through detailed scrutiny of students' progress in their books over time
 - strengthening governors' ability to analyse achievement data and ask more demanding questions of all leaders about rates of progress and the impact of teaching over time
 - developing more robust monitoring and assessment of the impact of the pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Most students join the academy at starting points that are often above average.
- From their starting points, some students perform very well in mathematics, exceeding national expectations for progress and GCSE grades of A* to C.
- Good achievement in mathematics is not mirrored in all subjects and rates of progress of several student groups require improvement, especially in English. Although the percentage of students making expected and more than expected progress in English rose in 2013, this is still below national figures and is not comparable to how well students achieve in mathematics.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, rose from 50% in 2012 to 62% in 2013. In 2012, students underperformed in science and English language, but this reversed in 2013. Revisions to the entry of students for three sciences and no use of early entry for GCSE science have aided improvement this year.
- In some subjects, physical education, music, art and design, modern foreign languages and English literature, students attain well and their grades meet or exceed national averages for GCSE grade C or above. There is a trend of improvement in geography and history from below the national average for A* to C grades in 2012 to above in 2013. Achievement in business studies and drama is less successful than other subjects. Students receive a mixed diet of teaching, with the quality ranging from outstanding to inadequate, which means their progress in different subjects over time fluctuates and affects their final attainment by Year 11. Girls are outperforming boys in English and mathematics.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is variable. Some do not achieve as well as their peers. Inspectors scrutinised their progress in lessons and information about their current progress. There are signs of improvement and most teaching assistants work effectively to give clear individual guidance to help students in lessons.
- The funding for helping Year 7 students catch up with work to improve their literacy and numeracy is used effectively in small booster groups to enable students to work at a different pace to their peers.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress in mathematics and perform better than their peers nationally. However, gaps remain between their progress and that of their fellow students, and the gap in mathematics is wider than that in English. Current data show that these gaps are narrowing. On average, students eligible for free school meals attain half a grade at GCSE level lower than their peers in school.
- Students from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language achieve at a similar level to their peers. Their progress varies across subjects and year groups.
- Leaders are developing whole school policies for literacy and numeracy. In some subjects teachers pay close attention to helping students develop their grammar, explain and justify their ideas, and become more confident in writing at length. Expectations for and development of high quality written work, good presentation and detailed, scholarly analysis are not embedded in the whole school.
- Students who join the academy with lower ability in Year 7 do not make as much progress as the more able. Some students of higher ability are not pushed to excel and achieve the higher grades of A* and A in their GCSE courses. In-school gaps between lower and higher ability students are not closing quickly enough.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because students' achievement is inconsistent across subjects at both AS and A level. Progress of students in history, music, German and accounting is much better than in psychology, sociology, chemistry and design and technology

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there is too much variability in most departments and across Key Stages 3 to 5. The exception to this is mathematics where teaching and students' achievement are typically good, a real strength of the school.
- Inspectors observed a full spectrum of inspirational, outstanding teaching, good teaching and teaching that was inadequate or requiring improvement. The same is true for marking. In some subjects marking is regular, constructive and guides students to edit and develop their ideas. Poor quality marking, infrequent marking and a lack of student response to teachers' comments are hampering students' progress. A pilot of a new 'green sticker' progress and next-step model in mathematics and science is beginning to help students and teachers regularly pinpoint what needs improving, how and why. The new system is in its infancy in other subjects, but early indications are positive from the pilot this term.
- Good teaching in physical education, mathematics, physics and history is characterised by teachers' continual assessment of students' progress, testing their understanding and quickly setting harder work to accelerate their achievement. No learning time is lost. In a Year 9 badminton class, students were encouraged to assess each other's skills in a long serve and check how well they were performing the shot compared with the teacher's good modelling. Peer feedback was constructive and supported good progress.
- In some lessons all students do the same work, at the same pace, and there are missed opportunities to set activities according to students' progress over time. Teachers' lesson plans list which students are talented, who has special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, but this is not used to tailor activities to their needs.
- Some weak teaching lacks challenge for the most able students. Several talented students told inspectors they want harder work. When teaching is too slow, and expectations are too low, teachers talk for too long, questioning is not used well to deepen learning and the pace of learning is pedestrian. The reverse of this is clear in vibrant, outstanding teaching. Inspectors saw quick-paced, probing questioning, different levels of work successfully matched to students' ability, and students keen to deepen their knowledge. In a good quality Year 7 French lesson, the teachers quickly gave higher ability students more challenge. A demanding, fast-paced Year 11 mathematics lesson helped students to apply and evaluate how to use quadratic formulae and students made outstanding progress because the lesson consolidated and extended their learning.
- Teachers' familiarity with students' progress, compared with national benchmarks, is steadily developing. Leaders are refining how data are collated and shared with subject leaders and teachers. Most students know their targets and some understand how to reach the next National Curriculum level or work towards higher grades. Others are much less knowledgeable about their progress. They do not understand how the feedback in their books supports their development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are good ambassadors for the school and respect the values that permeate the Christian life of the school. They respect difference, appreciate fellow students' viewpoints and support each other really well in the new vertical tutor group system.
 - An excellent range of enrichment trips to places such as the Gambia, together with the arts and sports events and charitable work, all significantly enhance students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
 - Sixth form students relish opportunities to become leaders and role models for younger students. They do this extremely well, supporting student with their academic work as well as helping students to resolve occasional friendship issues.
 - Most students enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. Low level disruption in lessons is rare. A few students become inattentive and are too chatty when work is too easy.
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Students are not wilfully disruptive.

- Attendance is above average and has remained so for several years. This is testimony to students enjoying their education at St Edward's and their wish to learn well. Not all teaching exploits this good attendance and commitment to learning by stretching students' potential in lessons and over time. A few students eligible for free school meals do not attend as regularly as their peers.
- Students who are removed from lessons to the inclusion room adjust their conduct. The percentage of fixed term exclusions is just below the national average. A few students who are eligible for free schools meals and of Black African ethnicity are excluded too often. There have been no permanent exclusions at the school for five years.
- Students are safe. They learn about the prevention of all types of bullying and are acutely aware of the dangers of cyber bullying and social networking sites. Use of racist or homophobic language is uncommon.
- Around the school most students move between lessons sensibly. They uphold expectations about good punctuality and orderliness in some of the more narrow corridors. Sixth form students lack communal study spaces but they behave well in rather cramped conditions in the sixth form block.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View judge that their children are safe and students behave well.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leaders and governors have not secured sufficiently robust monitoring of the progress of different groups of students until recently. Leaders' assessment of the quality of education provided by the school is too generous. Not all leaders have secure understanding of national expectations for good achievement, good teaching and the level of demand in the Ofsted inspection criteria for a school to be judged as good.
- Despite this, leaders and governors have proven capacity in leading improvement. Leaders have sustained above average student attendance, students' good behaviour, good teaching and successful achievement in mathematics. Leaders make judicious decisions, including changes to the curriculum, and do not enter students early for GCSE examinations. In addition, leaders are demonstrating the capacity to judge teaching and student achievement accurately in lessons, confirmed during 13 joint lesson observations with inspectors.
- The headteacher is passionately committed to nurturing leadership of his staff and of students. The responsibility given to sixth form students is admirable. They feel well supported by leaders when they lead assemblies, inter-house college events and induction events for Year 7 students.
- The headteacher recognises that developing high quality teaching in all subjects requires further improvement to eliminate the variability seen by inspectors. Senior leaders are increasingly challenging weak teaching. There is coaching for teachers who need support and teachers are monitored on a fortnightly basis. This is starting to help teachers use data about students' progress to plan lessons, but the impact of this is inconsistent across departments. Feedback from senior leaders to teachers on observation forms is generous. Written feedback to teachers does not examine carefully enough the progress of disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those who benefit from pupil premium funding, or how to help the most able to reach their potential. Leaders are not yet securing robust judgements by linking findings from lesson observations to scrutiny of the quality of students' learning in books and their subject knowledge over time. Even so, inspectors watched senior leaders giving good quality oral feedback to teachers after joint observations.
- Senior leaders are working with heads of subjects to analyse examination results. Some subject reviews are tightly focused on how to improve teaching with clear, measurable targets, but others do not. The academy development plan requires improvement because success criteria, targets for student achievement and timescales are too broad. Too few middle leaders are

assessing the impact of pupil premium funding in their departments or how to improve teaching and marking to close the remaining in-school gaps in achievement.

- Leaders and governors ensure that the policy for teachers' pay and progression is used robustly so that good performance is rewarded but weak performance is not.
 - The range of subjects on offer for students meets their abilities and interests. Leaders wisely decided to reduce the maximum number of GCSE examinations students can choose. This is helping students focus more intently on their studies. Leaders have ceased using early entry at GCSE and recognised that some students needed to study a modern language at National Vocational Qualification level rather than a full GCSE, with much success this year. Leaders have devised a sound action plan for the launch of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme next year. Leaders and teachers are benefiting from visiting other schools who successfully teach the IB qualification.
 - The varied enrichment activities serve students well and students feel there is good equality of opportunity. The programme to raise female participation in sport is doing very well and numbers are rising.
 - The school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are supportive of the headteacher and senior leaders and are becoming increasingly challenging of leaders' reports to their meetings. Governors regularly visit the academy and watch lessons. Findings from these visits are shared amongst governors, but there is no detailed analysis of the impact against targets in the academy development plan.
 - Governors work well with leaders to embrace the spiritual life of the school and are supportive of new initiatives such as the IB programme.
 - Governors challenge why results in English are below national expectations and ask demanding questions about teaching in the English department. Governors have not been as demanding of other middle leaders to assess why the most able students are not achieving higher results or how middle leaders are tackling in-school gaps in students' progress.
 - Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent, but are not able to judge the impact of booster classes or support work on students' progress and attainment. Governors have recently completed an external review of their skills and knowledge and there is a development plan. It has not yet led to a bespoke training programme to strengthen neither governors' understanding of achievement data nor the focus needed in asking questions about the remaining in-school gaps of certain groups of 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

Unique reference number	137145
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	425654

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1261
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gowlett
Headteacher	Reverend Alan Perry
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01708 730452
Fax number	01708 732485
Email address	info@steds.org.uk

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