

# King Ethelbert School Academy

Canterbury Road, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9BL

**Inspection dates** 4–5 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher and other leaders and governors are well supported by the executive headteacher. They have taken prompt and decisive action to improve teaching, and this is having a positive impact on the progress students make.
- Students achieve well in the range of different subjects they study, especially in English. There have been rapid improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Disabled students, those who have special educational needs, students who have English as an additional language and those in receipt of pupil premium funding achieve as well as their peers.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and students are very well supported. Data is used effectively to target underperformance so that intervention is personalised and effective.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Students are punctual, attendance is improving and exclusions have reduced. The respectful and harmonious ethos permeates the school community.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress for all students and groups of students is good, but not yet excellent. Over time, there has been some variation in how quickly students make progress in some subjects, including science.
- Occasionally, teachers do not always use the good information they have on students to challenge them enough or to match activities well to the different abilities of the students.
- Not all teachers provide students with regular enough and helpful enough feedback on their work to help them to improve at a fast rate. As a result, students' rate of progress varies across subjects.
- The best practice in checking on students' progress during lessons is not shared well enough across the school.

## Information about this inspection

- During the two days, inspectors observed 39 lessons and part lessons, including seven joint lesson observations with senior leaders. They also observed form tutor time and intervention sessions.
- Inspectors looked at students' work in lessons and discussed the students' learning and progress with them.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 and there were informal discussions with students before school and during break times to gather their views. At the time of the inspection Year 11 students were on study leave.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body and the local authority. The lead inspector also met with the executive headteacher, who is a National Leader of Education (NLE).
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including lesson observation records, governors' minutes, development plans, self-evaluation information, safeguarding documentation, performance management records and attainment and progress data.
- Inspectors took account of 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as 50 responses received from the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

David Smith, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional inspector
Helen Blanchard	Additional inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- King Ethelbert School Academy is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to be an academy on 1 April 2011.
- The school was judged to require improvement following the last inspection in June 2013.
- The school now meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4.
- The large majority of students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and looked-after children, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those supported by school action is well above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE English, mathematics and science.
- There is alternative curriculum provision at the Westwood Centre for a very small number of students in Year 10 and Year 11.
- The school is federated with a nearby grammar school and shares the same governing body. Through this partnership the school delivers a post-16 course, the International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate.
- The school holds a number of awards, including Artsmark Gold, International School and Healthy Schools Awards. It is also a partnership school for the Royal Shakespeare Company.
- The school has a major role in partnerships with local schools such as the East Kent Learning Alliance, and it is a strategic partner for the Teaching School.

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

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - ensuring that all teachers always use the good information they have about students to plan activities that are well matched to the different abilities of their students
  - sharing the best practice in the school to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently high in all subjects
  - ensuring that all teachers regularly and consistently give students clear written guidance on how to improve and allow them time to respond to the advice they are given.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school with overall attainment that is well below national averages. Students' attainment improved considerably in 2013 compared to that of earlier years and is now in line with national averages. The proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is now in line with the national average. The proportion of students making the expected progress in English and mathematics was in line with national averages in 2013 but school data shows it has improved further and is now above. This reflects good progress from students' starting points.
- Some students have already taken their GCSE examinations in English and mathematics and results show that progress in both subjects continues to improve. Students are able to improve their grades, as they are able to re-sit examinations. Relative underperformance in science has been rigorously addressed so that progress is now improving.
- The achievement of all groups, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, is improving, with middle-ability pupils making better-than-expected progress. In 2013 some students with special educational needs did not make as much progress as they should have but this underperformance has been tackled and progress of these students is now in line with that of other students. This is a result of the good support that they receive and the opportunities to follow more examination courses.
- Students attending off-site provision make good progress on courses that are personalised for their specific needs.
- Students in receipt of Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding make similar progress to their peers as a result of the school's support for their well-being and the development of basic skills, especially literacy, in Year 7. In 2013 the attainment of pupil-premium-funded pupils widened and was just under one grade lower in English and mathematics than their peers'. The school's data shows that the gap is reducing significantly and current students, from all year groups, are on track to make progress in line with that of other students.
- Students make good progress across the school as a result of the school's careful tracking and additional support. The improved information available to teachers helps them to support the progress of their students, but this is not yet always used effectively by all teachers.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good. The quality of teaching is characterised by strong subject knowledge which is used well to plan carefully resourced, fast-paced and mostly challenging lessons which enable students to make good or better progress.
- Teachers use a range of activities to engage their students and, as a result, most students are motivated and enthusiastic learners.
- Questioning is used well to probe students' understanding and to decide when to move the lesson on, as well as leading to high-quality discussions where views are challenged.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, benefit from careful planning and the additional help provided by support staff.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium and those who are supported by the Year 7 catch-up funding receive one-to-one support which focuses on literacy and ensures that they make good progress.
- There is a focus across the school on improving students' literacy and this is helping students to make better progress in all their subjects.
- Where teaching is not so good, questioning is often not used well enough so that progress and the embedding of learning are difficult for the teacher to assess. In such lessons observed,

teachers did not take account of the different needs of the students in their planning. Consequently, students did not have enough opportunity to use what they had already learned to think things out for themselves.

- The quality of teachers' feedback on students' work is not always consistent across the school. Students understand how well they are doing and know their targets for each subject, but sometimes feedback focuses on what they can do rather than providing them with clear guidance on what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Students value well-targeted support from teachers and other staff. Teachers create a very positive learning environment and there is clear respect and good relationships between students and staff.

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

- The behaviour of students is good and improving. Students' behaviour around the school and at break times is excellent. Students report that incidents of poor or disruptive behaviour in lessons are rare and that these are dealt with effectively when they occur. Students' relationships with each other and with staff are very positive and they are very welcoming and courteous towards visitors. One student commented, 'Teachers here go the extra mile for us!'
- Those students who need help with managing their behaviour are well supported by staff, and many benefit from the provision in the 'Learning Zone'. This, and other strategies used by staff to promote good behaviour management, has contributed to a rapid reduction in fixed-term exclusions. There have been no permanent exclusions since 2011.
- In the lessons observed, most students were enthusiastic and engaged in their learning. They take pride in their work, their school and the environment. They feel valued and report that the school seeks their views and that staff listen to their opinions. One student said, 'If we think something is a good idea, the school will try to make it happen, unless there is a good reason why not.'
- There are many opportunities for students to take on leadership roles, for example as prefects, peer mentors and lead learners.
- Improved leadership, data systems, more robust systems for the monitoring of students' progress and a more appropriate curriculum have all contributed to a sustained and rapid improvement in attendance. Attendance is now in line with the national average.
- Students of all ages say they that they feel happy and well looked after. They are well aware of the different forms of bullying, including racist, homophobic and cyber bullying, but say that bullying is rare. Students report that they are confident that teachers and other staff deal effectively with any incidents of bullying.
- The school ensures that students who attend alternative providers for their education also behave well, by checking and monitoring their attendance and progress carefully.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because students do not consistently display a thirst for, and a love of, learning. The development of students' independent learning and their critical thinking and research skills is not yet consistent across the school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leadership is strong. The headteacher, supported by her senior staff and governing body, is determined to ensure that the school serves the needs and aspirations of all of its students as well as it possibly can. Leaders acknowledge the need to make sure that students of all abilities make at least good progress.
- Leaders at all levels are highly ambitious for the students. The headteacher has been determined to see standards continue to rise and has been uncompromising in challenging

underachievement in the school where it has occurred. As a result of a sharp focus on improving teaching, performance at GCSE has increased so it is now in line with the national average and is set to improve even further.

- The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning are good. All leaders have an accurate view of both the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement, which they are addressing effectively. There is a shared belief that the school will achieve the very highest standards.
- The large majority of parents are very positive about the school. Staff are equally complimentary and say they enjoy working at the school. 'This is a fabulous place to work' and, 'All of us work as a team, with a real sense of purpose and achievement, for the benefit of our students' are comments which reflect the views of adults working in the school.
- The school has been successful in raising the attainment of students in receipt of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. It is using the additional funds very well, and as a result, the progress and achievement of these students are improving and gaps are closing rapidly at both key stages. Successful summer schools are held to support Year 6 pupils before they start at the school.
- Teachers appreciate the effective professional training programmes which the school has in place to support and develop them. This is linked to robust performance management, which ensures that staff at all levels are held fully to account for the progress of the students they teach.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' needs. The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a real strength and is enhanced through a comprehensive programme of clubs, activities and visits. The school is rightly very proud of its links with an orphanage and a high school in India which students support through fundraising. Some students have the opportunity to see the impact of their support as the school organises visits to India every two years.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding, including those who attend other settings, meet the current statutory requirements and equality of opportunity is promoted well through the highly inclusive culture of the school and by support for individual students. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form.
- The school has received good support from the local authority improvement adviser, who works closely with the school and fully understands the school's strengths and priorities for further development. The local authority's view is that this is a good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance of the school is a strength. While governors did not commission an external review, they have carried out a thorough internal self-review. The governors are experienced and well equipped to carry out their statutory duties, which they do effectively. They understand the school well, including its strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they know where there have been weaknesses in teaching and what has been done about this. They have an accurate knowledge of how good the quality of teaching is overall. They recognise where there has been underperformance in the past and now hold the headteacher and leaders at all levels to greater account. They are able to challenge the school to raise standards and improve performance more effectively because of the quality of information they now receive. Governors also have a good knowledge of a range of data and use this to compare the school's performance with that of other schools locally and nationally.
  - Governors fully understand how teachers' pay is related to performance and linked to the quality of teaching. They make sure that resources are used effectively to help students progress. For example, they ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent well. The governing body undertakes regular training to ensure that its knowledge is relevant and up to date, so it can continue to provide a good level of challenge and support for senior staff in driving improvements for the school.

## 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>	446422

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	750
<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>	11–12 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 831999
<b>Fax number</b>	01843 831015
<b>Email address</b>	kategreig@kingethelbert.kent.sch.uk



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