

# The King Edmund School

Vaughan Close, Rochford, SS4 1TL

**Inspection dates** 22–23 April 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school's aims and vision are clearly defined by its motto, 'In pursuit of excellence'. They are also evident in all aspects of its work.
- Achievement is good and students make good progress from their starting points in most subjects and year groups. This is because senior leaders have driven through improvements with tireless determination.
- Students achieve particularly well in English, business studies, dance, drama, ICT (information and communication technology), biology and physics.
- Students' learning and progress is tracked meticulously. Those students in danger of underachieving are spotted quickly.
- A systematic approach to improving teaching has ensured that teaching is now good.
- Students get on well with each other. They are considerate and well behaved.
- Leaders are fully aware of the sometimes complex needs of their students and their families. Leaders' caring, supportive approach promotes strong, effective relationships which help students to learn as well as possible.
- Governors are committed and hardworking; as a result, they know the school well. They support leaders well in their drive for improvement.
- The sixth form is good. It has improved considerably since the last inspection and is well led and managed.
- Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain. This is promoted particularly well through the ethos of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The GCSE results in mathematics and science are not as good as in some other subjects. The most able do not always reach the highest grades.
- Progress is not as rapid in Key Stage 4 as in Key Stage 3.
- Teachers do not always ensure that those students with special educational needs receive work which is matched closely enough to their ability to enable them to make good progress.
- Students do not engage well enough in French at Key Stage 3 so too few choose the language at GCSE.
- Some teachers do not consistently provide clear improvement points for students in their marking. When they do, these are not always actioned by students.
- Support programmes in mathematics are not of as high quality as they are in literacy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects and across all year groups. They looked at students’ work during lessons and spoke to them about their progress. Some observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Further scrutiny of students’ work took place across different subjects and year groups.
- Behaviour was observed in and around the school, and outside at break times.
- A range of documents was scrutinised including information about self-evaluation, achievement, attendance and behaviour. The school improvement plan and the school’s policies and procedures were also studied.
- Inspectors took account of the 99 responses to Parent View (Ofsted’s online questionnaire) and 96 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, senior leaders, middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.

## Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Laurence Reilly	Additional Inspector
Kevin Dyke	Additional Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The King Edmund School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British and the majority speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average but rising every year. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- A few students receive their education at alternative sites away from the school. These include the KEWT programme (King Edmund Waking Team), the Children's Support Service, Epic Quest and 'Notschool' (part of the Inclusion Trust).
- The school meets the current government floor standards. These are the minimum standards expected for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics and science, by ensuring that:
  - teachers have a clear understanding of what the least-able students can do so that work is planned for them which challenges but is not too hard
  - the most-able are challenged more effectively so that they reach the highest grades in GCSE examinations
  - all teachers' comments provide clear improvement points for students which are then acted upon.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress of the least-able students in mathematics and science at Key Stage 4 by:
  - building upon the good work already done to accelerate rates of progress in Key Stage 3
  - replicating the high quality literacy support programmes in place to improve mathematics.
- Ensure that students' engagement in French is promoted through more inspiring activities at Key Stage 3 in order to increase the numbers choosing the language at Key Stage 4.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the achievement of all students at the school. This is shared by the members of his senior leadership team, by middle leaders and by the staff as a whole. The commitment to improve attainment and progress is evidenced clearly in the school's improvement plan and in individual subject improvement plans. Students confirm that all teachers are focused on supporting them to achieve the best possible examination results.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The leadership of the school is aware of the key issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the progress of students at the school further. Improvements have already started and, in particular, the impact is evident in rising standards in mathematics and science.
- Comprehensive information about students' achievement is used effectively by leaders to spot any student who is not making enough progress. Action is then taken to remedy any issues and make sure that all catch up. Detailed information about different groups of students further enhances leaders' ability to intervene effectively to promote higher achievement.
- Information about the achievement, behaviour and attendance of those students attending alternative provision is thorough. Leaders take particular pride in ensuring that these most vulnerable students achieve as well as they can. The school keeps clear records and follows up any issues as they arise.
- Middle leaders have developed their skills well because the school provides effective training. The school makes good provision for subject leaders to acquire further higher-level qualifications. As a result they are able to take a high level of responsibility for their subject areas and are clearly focused on raising standards and improving teaching.
- Since the last inspection, the quality of leadership in the sixth form has improved and is now good. Leaders are clear about the strengths and areas for improvement; as a result, students make better progress.
- Teaching is good and improving because the school has an effective quality assurance system in place to monitor and develop the quality of teaching. Teachers are held to account rigorously through a stringent performance management system which checks the quality of their teaching and the rates of progress their students make. Senior leaders have tackled weak teaching. Leaders realise that there is some work to be done to ensure that teaching in mathematics and science promotes consistently good progress.
- The school's curriculum is suitably matched to the needs of the students at the school. This ensures that students are challenged and supported at the appropriate level, based on their prior attainment. This enables students to follow appropriate courses which match their interests and needs. The school's inclusive curriculum also promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders and governors are keen to ensure that students are able to play their part in British society. A wide variety of activities support this aim, including having guest speakers in school; targeted work on radicalisation; mentoring and support for bullying and racism; and trips and visits to places of worship. The school promotes a democratic approach to the school council elections. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school is working successfully to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students and current data show that the gap between these students and their peers is closing. One senior leader has oversight of the pupil premium funding and how it is spent. The comprehensive whole-school support for students now in place is having a clear impact in all year groups in English, mathematics and across the other subjects in the curriculum. This has been helped by improved links with parents who previously had not engaged with the school well. Every care is taken to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and that any discrimination is tackled robustly.

- Safety of students in the school is a high priority. Staff are well trained in identifying pupils at risk of harm and passing this information on to pastoral and senior staff. The school’s arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The school has strong links with its feeder primaries which helps its Year 7 students to have a smooth transition to secondary education. In other key year groups, for example in Years 9, 11 and 13, students receive extensive help, support and guidance so that they are able to move to the next stage of their education without any hitches. Students say that they are confident in the choices they make for the future.
- The school identified and commissioned support from the local authority in mathematics and science. The support received was, and continues to be, of good quality. There has been effective use of lead practitioners. Help with the Year 7 literacy catch-up programme was beneficial and support afforded to the sixth form has paid off.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are proud of the school’s positive relationship with the local community. They rightly cite the safety and welfare of the students as being of high importance and know what a great impact the school’s extended services has on caring for the most vulnerable students.
  - Governors are aware of the school’s priorities and areas for development. They have some knowledge of the performance data, although they do not always know the details of students’ outcomes in external examinations, for example in GCSEs and A Levels, or in the gaps between disadvantaged students and others. However, governors know how the pupil premium money is spent.
  - Governors know about the quality of teaching. They check records carefully and ask challenging questions when the need arises. They have a thorough understanding of performance management procedures and are clear that teachers are not rewarded for underperformance. Governors take an active part in reviewing pay awards; they ensure that teachers only receive pay rises when these are justified by students’ achievement.
  - Governors ensure that the school’s finances are allocated appropriately and efficiently, leading to cost effective staffing levels and provision of resources.

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

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. They arrive punctually to lessons and demonstrate a keenness to learn. They enjoy participating in question and answer sessions in class. Students in the sixth form relish the opportunity to debate and give their opinions.
- Good behaviour is a positive characteristic which is evident in most subjects and aspects of school life; students enjoy coming to school and appreciate the range of opportunities that the school offers them. Most parents who responded to Parent View agreed. Students’ behaviour and attendance at the alternative provision placements are good.
- Considering the large number of students on site, students’ behaviour around the school is positive. They are tolerant of each other and generally polite. The school works assiduously with students to encourage good manners and behaviour. Any poor behaviour is tackled effectively and promptly and parents are involved appropriately. Students take a pride in their environment and there is little evidence of litter or graffiti.
- Occasionally, behaviour in lessons is not good. This is because students lose interest in the work on offer, deviate from the given task or chat when they are supposed to be completing work.
- Persistent absence has been addressed effectively since the last inspection because the school’s actions to combat this have been unrelenting. The school understands that there are some issues within the large catchment area that have a knock-on effect on attendance.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The large majority of staff, students and parents agree that they or their children feel safe in school.
- Support from Rochford Extended Services is very valuable. They help those families who are most in need and, as a result, students are able to play as full a part in school life as they can. Work to prevent bullying is thorough and actions are effective. A few isolated examples of bullying were brought to the attention of the inspection team but these were found to have been fully investigated and appropriate action taken. The school's systems for addressing these issues are rigorous and incidents are fully recorded.
- Students are clear about how to stay safe when using social media and the internet in general. Training supports e-safety, and opportunities for parents to attend training sessions are included.

## The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. A wide range of initiatives to support better teaching, such as working parties and peer mentoring, have ensured that teachers have developed more confidence.
- The vast majority of teachers aim to develop a culture of accomplishment. This is especially evident in the creative arts, English and history. They plan their lessons well, establish good relationships and deploy an appropriate range of teaching strategies to engage and maintain the interest of students. As a result, many students make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Teaching in English is highly effective and promotes consistently good and sometimes outstanding progress. Teaching in mathematics has improved considerably this academic year and is now good.
- Questioning to assess students' knowledge is often effective. Questioning to prompt student discussion is of high-quality in some lessons, especially in the sixth form. For example, in an A-level law lesson, probing questioning generated deeper thinking and resulted in a lively exchange of views.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Marking and assessment in Year 13 art, for example, is of high quality. Students receive detailed feedback about their work and, as a result, they are able to make the improvements necessary to reach high levels of attainment.
- Students in alternative provision placements make good progress because teaching is effective. Programmes of work are well-honed to the needs of small groups and individuals.
- Teaching assistants often help students to access information and to develop understanding, resulting in better progress. Although teachers adapt tasks according to the ability of the students, sometimes the least able and those with special educational needs find the work too difficult which slows the amount of progress they make.
- Teachers do not always have the highest expectations of the most-able students and therefore the level of challenge in some lessons is too low. This means that the most-able, particularly in mathematics and science, do not make consistently good progress or reach the highest grades of which they are capable.
- Aspects of literacy such as spelling, punctuation, grammar and the use of technical vocabulary show improvement. This is because marking has improved. However, it is not yet consistent across departments and the quality of teachers' comments is variable. Students are expected to act upon their teachers' comments but this is also not consistent.
- Students in Key Stage 3 do not always concentrate well enough in French because activities do not motivate or engage them well enough in their learning. This has a negative effect on the proportion of students who carry on with the language after Year 9.
- Presentation of work is variable, depending on the expectation of teachers. Examples of high quality work

were seen in English but in some instances teachers accept poorer quality of work, from boys in particular.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Students join the school with attainment which is well below average. Historically, the proportion of students achieving five GCSE grades at A\* to C including English and mathematics is below average. However, inspection evidence shows that the attainment of current Year 10 and 11 is higher.
- In 2014, the proportion of students making expected and more than expected progress in English was comparable with the national average. However, in mathematics proportions were below average, particularly for the least-able students and those with special educational needs. Students did not make consistently good progress in science. Students achieve particularly well in English, business studies, dance, drama, ICT, biology and physics.
- Achievement in the school is improving and students are currently making good progress in English and mathematics. The school's records clearly show that students in both Years 10 and 11 are on track to achieve higher results than in 2014. Inspection evidence gathered through looking at students' work and observing teaching supports this view. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 make better progress than those in Years 10 and 11.
- The 2014 data shows that disadvantaged students did not make as much progress as their peers either within the school or nationally. Disadvantaged students currently in the school are making better progress. Gaps measured from the baseline identified by the school at the start of the year shows gaps are narrowing.
- In 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and their classmates was one grade in English and one and a half grades in mathematics. This has widened in mathematics. Compared with other students nationally the gap is larger, just over a grade in English but two grades in mathematics. The gap also has widened in mathematics. The school closely tracks the attainment and progress gaps for disadvantaged students from a baseline at the beginning of the year. Inspection evidence shows that these gaps are now narrowing across all year groups.
- Some of the most-able students did not make the progress that they could have in 2014, particularly in mathematics. The historical weaknesses evident in the teaching of mathematics over time are now being successfully addressed; therefore students' books and current tracking information show that progress is accelerating this year. The most-able students make good progress in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress in English but in mathematics and science progress is slower. The school has a well-targeted approach to raising the standards of literacy of its lowest achievers. It is now building upon the success of its literacy programmes by applying a similar strategy towards improving numeracy standards, including those of its disadvantaged students. This has not yet had time to make an impact on achievement.
- Students who attend the off-site provision achieve well. Courses are appropriate and most are accredited. Courses have a good impact on developing students' basic skills and on preparing them for life after school.
- The school entered eleven students early for mathematics this year. These were students in danger of not completing Year 11 for a variety of reasons. As a result, all achieved a grade. The grades of the most-able students were not affected.
- Year 7 catch-up programmes for students who start in the school with below average skills in literacy and numeracy promote better learning experiences and higher standards. The summer school and Saturday 'catch-up' sessions had a good impact on the progress of students in the year 2013 to 2014.

**The sixth form provision is good**

- Achievement in the sixth form has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Students enter the sixth form with below average attainment and leave with broadly average attainment at AS and A2, and above average for students currently studying on BTEC courses.
- Achievement has improved at both A2 and AS levels in 2014 because of actions taken to address weaknesses. There are no groups of students who are underachieving. Although there is a slight difference between girls and boys, this is in line with national variances. Students make particularly good and often better progress in business, economics and law. The school meets and exceeds the government's 16 to 19 minimum floor standards.
- There are strengths in the guidance given to students to make appropriate choices, including a mix of BTEC and A-level courses. There are good links with local employers for those on vocational courses. The curriculum meets all requirements for the 16 to 19 study programmes. There are opportunities for students who have not achieved a grade C in mathematics or English to take an appropriate course to improve their qualifications. There is good information advice and guidance and preparation for next steps.
- Retention on courses was good last year. No students left the school from the sixth form last year without employment, a place in further education or training. There was an increase of 10% of students applying to university.
- Behaviour and attitudes in the sixth form are very positive. Students are well prepared through discussions, outside speakers and involvement with the school as a whole for life in modern Britain.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good in the majority of subjects. Students are challenged appropriately through high quality teacher questioning. Students work well together to improve their examination technique. For example, in psychology, the use of model answers to examination questions ensured that students knew exactly what was required to gain maximum marks.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Leaders have brought about a number of important improvements in students' achievement, underperforming subjects, vocational subjects and support for those students finding their work difficult.
- Leaders are aware of the areas which still require improvement such as achievement in science, English, geography and media studies. There is also work to do to increase the proportions of the highest grades.



## 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>	136868
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	462117

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>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1536
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Thorn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Osborn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 545771
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