

Gable Hall School

Southend Road, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope Essex SS17 8JT

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, governors and the trust have not maintained the good standards identified in the previous inspection.
- In 2017, Year 11 pupils made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally. Current pupils are not making consistently good progress across the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress in the school. Leaders are not closing the gaps in their achievement quickly enough.
- Leaders do not ensure that they check the accuracy of their own information regarding attendance and behaviour. As a result, published information about attendance and behaviour at the school is inaccurate.
- A few pupils exhibit low self-esteem, and are not being well identified and supported to improve their emotional well-being.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are inconsistent in quality. Staffing turbulence has had a negative impact on leaders' ability to secure consistency in some subject areas.
- Some lessons are disturbed by poor behaviour. In particular, pupils and a significant minority of staff report that the behaviour in lower-ability sets has a negative impact on pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils who access alternative education is not reviewed routinely or robustly enough to check on its effectiveness in meeting pupils' needs.
- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan learning for the most able and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- A significant minority of parents are not positive about the quality of provision.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal, trust, leaders and governors are determined to raise standards in the school.
- Leadership and provision in the sixth form are good.
- A broad, balanced curriculum is matched well to pupils' abilities and interests. Pupils greatly value enrichment activities and trips.
- Good careers advice ensures that pupils progress into education, training or employment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders in monitoring attendance, behaviour and alternative provision, so that all statutory information is precisely recorded and presented
 - using this information to develop a more accurate understanding of when leaders should intervene to support pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare more effectively
 - developing more positive relationships with parents who have concerns about the quality of provision in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and raise standards, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan learning to meet the needs of pupils, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils
 - raising expectations about what pupils can achieve in lessons, especially but not exclusively for the most able pupils
 - increasing the progress of all pupils from their varied starting points, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - supporting staff to embed behaviour management strategies in the lessons where poorer behaviour has an impact on learning.
- Enhance the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reviewing the provision for the most vulnerable pupils to ensure that as many as possible have access to full-time education on-site or high-quality provision off-site
 - developing the provision to support the emotional well-being of pupils who have lower self-esteem, especially concerning their position and regard in the school community.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders acknowledge that staffing challenges, plus the additional support that they gave to other schools within the trust, has been detrimental to maintaining good standards in teaching and learning at Gable Hall School. Leaders and governors were disappointed by Year 11 GCSE results in 2017. Although leaders are now taking action to stem some of the decline, they have not yet secured the good standards identified in the previous inspection.
- Systems for monitoring the attendance of pupils are not rigorous. Leaders have not checked that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles in the recording of attendance information. As a result, there have been incorrect attendance codes used for some pupils in the school when they are absent. Published information regarding the attendance and behaviour of some pupils is not accurate, most notably for pupils who attend off-site provision.
- The school's information about the behaviour of pupils in alternative provision is inaccurate. While the school prides itself on not excluding pupils, inspection findings confirmed that pupils in alternative provision are occasionally being excluded. The exclusions are not being recorded formally in the school's recording systems so that leaders are able to identify quickly when to challenge alternative providers about the quality of provision for these pupils.
- The school's internal information about behaviour is not precise enough. Inspectors found clear evidence of higher levels of internal isolation than leaders' records show. There is a higher number of internal isolations for high-end misdemeanours in 2016/17 and 2017/18 than the records suggest. Leaders are unable, therefore, to identify accurately pupils whose behaviour is having a detrimental impact on their learning and take action to address it quickly.
- Leaders have not done enough to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils. The pupil premium funding is used for a wide range of initiatives such as small-group work and trips. However, these initiatives are not ensuring that these pupils catch up with their peers in the school, or other pupils nationally, quickly enough.
- A significant number of parents have concerns about the school's leadership, and about communication, pupils' behaviour and the quality of provision. Of the 107 parents who completed Parent View, almost half would not recommend the school.
- Most staff are proud to work at the school, feel well supported and say that leaders consider their well-being. However, about a quarter of the 75 staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey disagreed that behaviour in the school was good.
- Leaders are beginning to raise standards. Leaders have strengthened procedures to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Assessment information is gathered throughout the school year to gauge the progress that pupils are making. Leaders' analysis of this information is beginning to inform where further support is needed to prevent pupils from falling behind. However, some inconsistencies remain, and this adversely affects the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- The principal is a determined and resilient leader. He, alongside other leaders, is

focusing on improving pupils' outcomes. The principal works closely with the chief executive officer of the trust. They are working collaboratively to identify and take action to improve the school. However, their view of the quality of provision is overgenerous.

- Pupils have access to a wide range of subjects in the curriculum. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils achieve the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualification at key stage 4. Extra-curricular opportunities enable pupils to develop their skills and interests further, particularly in the arts and sport.
- Middle leaders work collegiately. They understand their responsibility to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their departments. They are highly supported and are given professional opportunities to develop their leadership skills.
- Recently qualified teachers feel well supported by leaders. They work closely together and are given lots of opportunities to share ideas. They feel valued by senior leaders and quickly adapt to the school's systems and procedures.
- A programme of staff training is securing improvements in teaching. The school has made good use of strong practice within the school to improve the quality of teaching. Leaders' recent work to improve the quality of teaching is making a positive impact.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. High-quality leadership and effective provision ensure that students make good progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors, in both the local governing body and the trust, have not ensured that the good standards identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. Although they scrutinise the information provided by school leaders, governors do not ensure that they have secure evidence to evaluate leaders' effectiveness.
- Appropriate checks are made by governors to ensure that statutory duties are met regarding safeguarding pupils and the employment of staff. However, they have not ensured that they check thoroughly enough on the provision for pupils who do not access school on a full-time basis. As a result, they have inaccurate information about these pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Governors are very committed and take their roles and responsibilities very seriously. They have a wide range of skills and expertise to support leaders. They understand their roles and responsibilities. They visit the school regularly with a focus on improving standards across the school for all pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with children.
- Staff training is appropriate and systematic. Staff are trained and understand what to do should a pupil disclose an incident to them.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe. They receive regular assemblies, lessons and information about how to keep themselves safe at school, when using social media and in the outside world.

- Risk assessments are carried out routinely. Safety for staff and pupils using the site is a priority.
- Although not always recorded accurately on the school's central system, leaders do have evidence of the checks made on the pupils who access education off-site, to ensure the safety of those pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across and within subjects and year groups. Too often, teachers do not make the best use of time to promote learning.
- The most able students are not consistently set work that is sufficiently challenging and demanding.
- Some teachers do not use effective strategies to address low-level disruption from pupils in lessons. They do not implement the school's policy on behaviour consistently well. Where teaching, learning and assessment are not good, pupils tend to lose interest, do not listen to instructions and talk when they are supposed to be listening. This disrupts their learning and that of others.
- Teachers do not consistently plan work that meets the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Tasks often prove to be too difficult for them because teachers have not considered what they already know from their prior learning. In addition, teachers underestimate the level of support that pupils need to help them to understand what to do.
- Some teachers' questioning does not encourage pupils to think deeply. Too often teachers accept brief answers. This approach hinders pupils' ability to think logically, to apply prior knowledge and develop a thorough understanding of their learning.
- Implementation of the school's homework policy is uneven. Some teachers routinely set homework for pupils to consolidate their learning at home, but others do not.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are generally positive. Most staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, especially in relation to how pupils conduct themselves around the school site and in lessons.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is typically strong. However, this is not the case where a few teachers are teaching subjects in which they have no specialist knowledge.
- Stronger aspects of teaching are evident when teachers explain difficult points clearly, check pupils' understanding and quickly adapt their teaching where necessary. On these occasions, the tasks they set are appropriately challenging for pupils of different abilities. Questioning and discussion engages all learners, and pupils have time to discuss and evaluate their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- A number of the most socially and emotionally vulnerable pupils are not routinely accessing full-time provision, in both key stages 3 and 4. Some of these pupils are not regularly attending their alternative provision placement, while other pupils are on reduced timetables. When this occurs, pupils do not get access to high-quality provision. Although leaders make basic safeguarding checks, leaders do not ensure that this provision is the best suited to pupils' needs or is supporting them to re-access full-time provision quickly enough.
- Some younger pupils in the lower-ability classes highlighted concerns about their experience of school and how other pupils treat them. They do not believe that staff care for them, and believe that they are treated with disrespect by other pupils. These pupils' self-esteem and emotional well-being needs are not being well met.
- Most pupils are more positive about their confidence in staff to tackle bullying issues in the school. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with well. Those pupils who are members of the school council take pride in their role and are keen to represent the views of their peers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A small number of pupils do not behave well. For example, they call out without permission, are reluctant to follow teachers' instructions and are too slow to start working. This inappropriate behaviour is not consistently addressed by some staff. In particular, inspection evidence and pupils' commentary indicate that this occurs more frequently in the lower-ability classes.
- Published information about pupils' attendance shows that it is above the national average and that the proportion of pupils who miss school regularly is below the national average. However, inaccuracies in the recording of a small group of pupils on the school's management information system mean that leaders do not know well enough where they need to intervene to improve the attendance of individual pupils or groups of pupils.
- Most pupils take pride in their appearance. They are smartly dressed, and most come prepared for lessons and behave in a polite, respectful way to staff, other pupils and visitors.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of pupils over time is too variable across the curriculum.
- Pupils' progress from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4 was well below average in 2017. Pupils made limited progress in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics, languages and humanities.
- Last year, the proportion of Year 11 pupils attaining higher-grade passes in GCSE English and mathematics was lower than the national average.
- The leadership team has recently made essential changes by recruiting high-quality teachers, to ensure that current pupils are making much stronger progress than in the past.

- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally, by a significantly wide margin. The school's assessment information indicates noticeable improvement in progress for disadvantaged pupils in the current Years 7 to 11. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is too variable because the quality of provision for them is uneven.
- Currently, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is beginning to improve across all year groups because, increasingly, teachers are planning more suitable learning for them. However, this welcome development is not firmly established.
- Leaders previously entered a number of pupils for early examinations in science. The school acknowledges that pupils did not always achieve their highest grades by the end of Year 10 when they first sat the examinations. This improved when pupils resat the examinations in Year 11. The school has amended this policy so that pupils, where they need it, are receiving more teaching time to achieve their highest grades before sitting examinations.
- Pupils take advantage of the wide range of options on offer through the curriculum to make informed choices about their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Progress is good in the sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form has improved since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the sixth form are effective in promoting students' high aspirations and positive self-esteem. Leaders have high expectations. These factors help to ensure that students succeed.
- Students follow academic and vocational courses appropriate to their needs and abilities. These enable them to make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good in the sixth form. Teachers' strong subject knowledge, effective questioning and inspiring approaches to teaching and learning enable students to add to their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Students work hard in lessons.
- Personal development and welfare in the sixth form are good. Students are happy, and feel well supported and safe.
- Relationships between staff and students are strong. These relationships are based on mutual respect and the understanding of staff for each individual student and his or her individual needs.
- Sixth-form students are prefects and act as good role models for younger pupils.
- Good impartial careers advice, guidance and support enable students to make well-informed choices about their future. This prepares them well for life beyond the sixth form.
- Students speak of a positive atmosphere and of being encouraged to do well by their teachers.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress from their starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	136854
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10045960

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 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,466
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	176
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Robb Harman
Principal	Clive Stokes
Telephone number	01375 400800
Website	www.ortu.org/Gable-Hall
Email address	Jane.Webb@GableHall.com
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school and has a sixth form.
- The school specialises in performing arts.
- The school opened as an academy in September 2011. In October 2013, the academy became a multi-academy trust. It took over responsibility for the adjacent Corringham Primary School and in September 2016, Hassenbrook Academy.
- The multi-academy trust name changed in September 2017 to Ortu Federation Ltd, previously known as The Stanford and Corringham Schools Trust. Ortu Federation Ltd has nine trustees. There is also a local governing body.

- The sixth form is a 'soft' federation with two other local 11 to 16 schools: St Clere's and Hassenbrook Academy. In September 2017, the Stanford and Corringham Sixth Form Centre became known as the Ortu Sixth Form Centre, Stamford and Corringham.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school uses alternative providers for a small number of its pupils. These are BEP Group (Business and Enterprise Partnership Ltd), Future Gateway, Olive Academy, Rally Sports and South Essex College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 63 lessons across the school. The vast majority of the observations in lessons were carried out with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer of the trust, representatives of the governing body, the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with pupils, visited tutor groups and observed pupil interactions during social times.
- Inspectors listened to a group of Year 7 pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a wide range of evidence, including: the school's self-evaluation; action plans; performance information; attendance records; behaviour records; safeguarding files; recruitment checks; and pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the 75 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the four responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- On 12 June 2018, three of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school unannounced to gather further evidence for this inspection.
- Following the original inspection in May 2018, Ofsted received complaints that indicated that pupils had been concealed from inspectors during the inspection. Following a review of the inspection evidence, Ofsted decided that additional evidence was needed to secure judgements and provide parents with assurances about the thoroughness of the inspection.
- After talking to pupils, parents and reviewing all available evidence, there was no evidence that pupils were hidden during the 22–23 May inspection.
- During this one-day visit, inspectors reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour information. They also reviewed the provision and support for pupils who were not accessing full-time education on-site. They visited short parts of lessons, met with pupils formally and spoke to some pupils in lessons. They held meetings with a range of leaders, and spoke to the local authority. Governors from both the trust and local governing body were also invited to take part in some meetings.
- During the initial inspection in May 2018, inspectors took into account the 140 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 130 free-text responses. Inspectors also viewed the internal questionnaire responses that had been completed by parents. However, it became evident that Parent View had been accessed inappropriately by some parents more than once. These additional commentaries were removed and 107 parental views were reconsidered during the additional inspection day on 12 June 2018.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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