

The Royal Harbour Academy

(Formerly the Ellington and Hereson School) Newlands Lane, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6RH

Inspection dates

12 June–12 July 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Teaching in key stages 3 and 4 has been too weak over time to make sure that pupils achieve as well as they should. Teachers' expectations have not been high enough, because they have not taken pupils' previous learning into account effectively.
- Instability in staffing has had an adverse effect on pupils' learning, including pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' attainment in GCSE examinations is low because pupils have not made enough progress across a range of subjects. In particular, boys, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils are not achieving enough.
- Although rising, pupils' attendance remains below average. This has hindered some pupils' progress, especially that of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders, including governors, have not made sure that pupil premium funding makes a significant difference to disadvantaged pupils' learning. These pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- While behaviour is improving overall, some pupils do not behave well enough in lessons. Some staff do not follow the behaviour policy consistently.
- Until recently, leaders' actions have lacked the required precision to make necessary improvements in key stages 3 and 4. Subject leaders' effectiveness varies too much.
- The governing body has not challenged leaders effectively enough, despite some governors' good work.
- The curriculum in key stages 3 and 4 has not allowed pupils to gain sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, in close partnership with Coastal Academies Trust, are beginning to improve teaching, pupils' outcomes and the curriculum in key stages 3 and 4.
- Teaching and achievement in the sixth form are strong. The challenging curriculum meets students' needs and raises their aspirations.
- Pupils' personal development is effective. Most pupils are respectful, tolerant and confident. Careers guidance is a strength of the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are supported well by pastoral teams. Staff work hard to build positive relationships between families and the school.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly raise standards of teaching and learning in key stages 3 and 4 to improve pupils' outcomes, especially for boys, disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers use information about pupils' previous learning effectively to provide greater levels of challenge for pupils, whatever their starting points
 - eliminating low-level disruption in lessons through the consistent application of the behaviour policy
 - sharing the most effective practice in the school more widely while eliminating inadequacies in teaching.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - building on recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum in key stages 3 and 4 through taking precise and urgent action to eradicate weak practice
 - ensuring pupils' attendance continues to improve, especially that of disadvantaged pupils
 - further developing the leaders' skills and capacity, including subject leaders, so that they have a demonstrably positive impact on pupils' progress
 - making sure that governors hold school leaders fully to account to secure necessary improvements, including through the effective use of pupil premium funding.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In key stages 3 and 4, leaders have not secured an adequate quality of education for pupils since the school opened. There are signs, however, that pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate during the last year. Leaders' actions to raise the quality of teaching are starting to make a difference. While the quality of education that the school provides is inadequate overall, it is, therefore, beginning to improve.
- Leaders have been effective in ensuring that provision and the curriculum are good in the sixth form. Strong teaching in the sixth form enables students to achieve well.
- Coastal Academies Trust (CAT) has provided invaluable and substantial support to help leaders improve teaching and pupils' achievement this academic year. Importantly, expertise from across the trust is strengthening leadership at all levels, providing necessary training for staff and developing the curriculum so that it better meets pupils' needs. Leaders have a much better understanding of the required actions to make further improvements.
- Over time, leaders' plans have not focused sharply enough on raising the quality of provision in key stages 3 and 4. This has limited the pace at which teaching is improving across the school. Leaders' recent plans, building on support from across the trust, are more specific, targeted and effective.
- Although in its early stages, leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching is now thorough and accurate. Teachers welcome the useful feedback that they now receive about how to improve their work. Leaders are tackling any underperformance more urgently and effectively than has been the case in the past. Equally, leaders are starting to share emerging stronger practice more widely.
- Leaders' monitoring does not link with the formal arrangements to manage teachers' performance fully. Systems of accountability are not, therefore, as strong as they could be.
- Leaders' actions to create an inclusive and positive school community have ensured that pupils are well supported by an effective pastoral team. Staff have worked hard to build strong relationships between families and school. This has helped, for example, to improve the attendance of boys.
- Changes to the behaviour policy and other effective action by leaders have led to a reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions and an overall improvement in pupils' behaviour. Leaders rightly recognise that the school policy needs to be implemented more consistently by staff.
- Subject leaders' effectiveness varies. While they are keen to make a difference to pupils' progress, only some are having a demonstrable impact on the quality of provision in the subjects that they lead.
- Instability in staffing, a number of temporary teaching appointments and difficulties in recruiting subject specialists have limited pupils' progress across the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- While improving, leaders' analyses and evaluations of pupils' progress are not sharp

enough. Necessary changes were made too slowly in the past. For example, the most able pupils continue to make less progress over time than they could.

- Pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively. Leaders have not analysed or evaluated in enough depth what is making a positive difference to disadvantaged pupils to improve their attendance, behaviour, progress and attainment.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum consistently matches pupils' abilities and needs during key stages 3 and 4. Consequently, the most able pupils, for example, are not sufficiently challenged. Leaders have very recently redesigned the key stage 3 and 4 curricula to remedy this in the future.
- The on-site alternative curriculum provision, 'ACE', provides enhanced support for pupils who have experienced difficulties in engaging with education. Most of these pupils follow a reduced curriculum. However, pupils' attendance and progress are variable.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not challenged leaders effectively enough about the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes. At times in the past, they have been too slow to act. Some governors are effective in their roles. For example, they have recently reviewed staffing, funding, the curriculum and the quality of provision with school leaders. However, the governing body in its current form does not have the necessary skills and experience to bring about the changes required.
- Honest discussions between members of CAT and governors have helped governors understand what substantial improvements are needed. Governors now have a more realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although governors participate in CAT's governance arrangements by choice, the delay in the school joining the trust has hampered CAT's efforts to strengthen governance further.
- Historically, governors have not monitored the school's use of additional funding closely enough. While governors recognise the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been weak for the last few years, they have not yet agreed actions to ensure that funding will support current disadvantaged pupils more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A safeguarding governor routinely checks with school leaders that appropriate actions are in place to keep pupils safe at school. School records are accurate and complete. The safeguarding team draws on the support and guidance of outside agencies when necessary.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe in the wider world. They are very clear who to talk to if they have any concerns. They are confident that there is always someone at school who will take time to listen and support them if needed.
- The designated safeguarding lead diligently checks that all staff receive regular

safeguarding training. Therefore, all staff have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to keeping pupils safe and know who to report incidents to should a concern arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate in key stages 3 and 4. Typically, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. Too many pupils have gaps in their learning, which means that they do not have sufficient skills or knowledge to tackle more complex activities.
- Frequent changes in staffing across a number of subjects, including mathematics and science, have adversely affected pupils' learning, particularly in key stage 3. Some of these pupils told inspectors that they were unsure of what they are learning. A key stage 3 pupil told an inspector that: 'I feel anxious and worried all day when I know my lesson has no teacher. It affects all my other lessons.'
- Low-level disruption is evident in some lessons, especially where teaching does not engage, stimulate or inspire pupils. When this occurs, pupils lose focus and become distracted easily, which has a negative impact on their own and others' learning.
- Most staff have information about pupils' prior achievement. However, there is too much inconsistency across subjects in how this information is used to stretch pupils of different abilities, including the most able pupils. Too many teachers do not effectively build on what pupils have learned previously, including at key stage 2.
- Leaders map provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities across the school. The SEN coordinator (SENCo) is aware of the support that these pupils need in order to access the curriculum. However, instability in staffing has meant that some pupils have not received this support consistently or in a timely way. This has limited the progress of these pupils.
- Many pupils join the school with low literacy skills. The English department has recently introduced directed reading time to improve pupils' reading and comprehension. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop an interest in reading, which not only improves their reading skills, but also their oracy and their understanding of language and grammar.
- Catch-up funding has been used to create 'nurture groups' in Years 7 and 8 to accelerate pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, as well as to help develop their confidence. However, these activities are not routinely monitored to ensure that these pupils are making the progress that they need to so that they catch up. Gaps in knowledge and skills persist for many of these pupils.
- Contrastingly, teaching in the sixth form is strong. Some teaching during key stages 3 and 4 is also effective. This is particularly so in design technology, physical education, art and, increasingly, in English and mathematics. Where this is the case, teachers engage pupils in challenging tasks and teaching assistants are well briefed and support pupils appropriately.
- In the strongest teaching, particularly in the sixth form, adults' effective questioning reinforces pupils' understanding and ignites their interest so that they want to learn

more. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, pupils enthusiastically discussed emotive language seen in a video about the Amazon rainforest. They subsequently applied these persuasive techniques in their own writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Assemblies and the tutor programmes ensure that pupils have a strong understanding of the school's values and the local community.
- Pupils are tolerant and respectful of people of different cultures, backgrounds and faiths. They have a strong understanding of equality and are keen to contribute positively to an inclusive culture. Pupils recognise that they all contribute to their school community. For example, one pupil told inspectors that 'we should all support one another'.
- Most pupils are confident and generally treat others with kindness and dignity. The tutor programme also includes good work to develop pupils' resilience, building necessary skills and understanding to equip pupils for future life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are aware that they need a healthy mind and body and are taught how to respect both. Those who need additional support to improve their mental health and well-being are provided with counselling and workshops where appropriate.
- All pupils at key stage 3 follow a programme of philosophy and ethics. This helps them to understand different religions and ways of thinking about the world, as well as how people's beliefs influence their actions.
- Pastoral leaders and tutors know their pupils very well. Tutors follow a well-developed careers programme which teaches pupils about different options in the future. This programme runs from Years 7 to 11. Additional support is provided for key stage 4 pupils to ensure that they secure an appropriate post-16 course or apprenticeship. As a result, the vast majority progress on to educational courses, employment or training at the end of Year 11.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Levels of attendance are below the national average, but rising because leaders' actions to improve attendance are having a positive impact. However, leaders recognise further work is needed to address the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Senior and pastoral leaders are vigilant about pupils' behaviour. Clear systems exist for addressing inappropriate behaviour. As a result of leaders' actions, there has been a significant reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions this academic year.
- Some staff and parents raised concerns about bullying and poor behaviour. Pupils said bullying was rare. Inspectors witnessed some examples of inappropriate behaviour and low-level disruption in lessons. Typically, however, the school is an orderly place.

- Pupils told inspectors behaviour was well managed by most but not all staff. There is some variability in the consistency with which teachers apply the school's behaviour policy. Some pupils commented on the inconsistencies in sanctions linked to the behaviour policy, for example those linked to the use of mobile phones in lessons.
- The school's 'ACE' curriculum aims to teach pupils how to manage their challenging behaviour. Professionals from social services and other external teams work with these pupils to improve their behaviour. A few pupils disengage from this on-site provision and need further additional support. These pupils attend the Enterprise Learning Alliance, which is a local pupil referral unit.
- A number of pupils arrive with very challenging behaviour linked to their SEN and/or disability. An extended resource intervention centre, 'Eric', has been created to provide a quiet area for these pupils which is a calm, tranquil environment. The SENCo has ensured that many of these pupils are now appropriately supported by education, health and care plans. Some of these pupils have transferred to special schools locally.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- GCSE examination results for the past three years have been below the government's floor standards. In 2017, pupils typically attained a grade below other pupils nationally across a range of subjects, including mathematics and science. Attainment in English was also weak, with pupils attaining almost two grades below their peers.
- Pupils made weak progress in their GCSEs in 2017. The most able pupils made considerably less progress than those with low prior attainment on entry. Most-able pupils typically attained a grade-and-a-half below others with similar starting points nationally in most of their subjects. Boys' outcomes were significantly below girls, typically gaining a grade below girls in a range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly. Pupils who fall behind are not supported well enough to make the strong progress that they need to make. Differences between their attainment and that of their peers are not closing significantly. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils attained almost two grades below other pupils nationally. They also made particularly slow progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Weak teaching in the past has adversely affected current pupils' progress. Pupils, including the most able, boys and those who are disadvantaged are not making the progress of which they are capable. Some pupils' progress, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, has been hindered by poor attendance.
- There are signs that leaders' actions to improve teaching are beginning to accelerate pupils' progress. For example, current Year 11 pupils are on track to make more progress in English and mathematics. These encouraging indications are recent and do not yet extend across all subjects and year groups. In contrast, students in the sixth form achieve well.
- Pupils who attend the school's 'ACE' provision follow a reduced number of qualifications appropriate to these pupils' needs. Pupils' progress in this provision is too variable.
- Pupils who attend the pupil referral unit are supported to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. They attend the unit regularly and make good progress in regulating

and managing their behaviour appropriately.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Teachers and leaders are highly ambitious for students in the small but growing sixth form. Teachers plan diligently to meet students' needs, ensuring work is personalised for individual students. Teachers' feedback is sharply focused so that students know exactly what they need to do to improve further.
- Students typically make good progress on vocational courses, but particularly strong progress in their academic studies. All of the requirements of the 16 to 19 programmes of study are met.
- Students resitting GCSE English and mathematics examinations in the sixth form make positive progress. This is stronger in English than it is in mathematics.
- The sixth-form curriculum is challenging and is very well suited to students' needs. As well as academic and vocational courses, students make the most of a range of opportunities for personal development.
- Students benefit from a wide and varied extra-curricular programme which includes voluntary work, a number of well-attended clubs and a range of visits and trips. There are opportunities for students to contribute to the wider school community. Students attend regularly.
- Leaders monitor students' achievement closely and make sure that extra help is provided for any students at risk of falling behind. Teachers know students well. Students particularly value the genuine interest that teachers show in making sure that students achieve what they should. Relationships between staff and students are strong.
- Teachers value leaders' support highly and that of colleagues in CAT. This is particularly helpful when planning the curriculum and thinking about teaching approaches. Teachers usefully check the accuracy of their assessments and the quality of students' work with teachers from other schools in the trust.
- Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of any risks that they may face and have been helped to develop strategies to avoid these.
- Leaders ensure that students have extensive help to secure either a university place or an appropriate apprenticeship programme. Destination information is improving as an increasing number of students are choosing to go on to university or a level 3 apprenticeship when they complete their studies. One student said, 'Any pathway is open to us.'

School details

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| Unique reference number | 135826 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10049030 |

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

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| Type of school | Modern (non-selective) |
| School category | Foundation |
| 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 | 851 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 68 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Hayden Beerling |
| Headteacher | Simon Pullen |
| Telephone number | 01843 572 500 |
| Website | www.rha.kent.sch.uk |
| Email address | reception@rha.kent.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The Ellington and Hereson School became known as The Royal Harbour Academy from September 2015, when The Marlowe Academy closed and The Ellington and Hereson School expanded to include The Marlowe Academy's pupils, staff and premises. The headteacher of The Ellington and Hereson School became the headteacher of The Royal Harbour Academy. The Marlowe Academy had been in special measures. The Ellington and Hereson School was judged good when it received its last full Ofsted inspection in 2012.

- CAT was granted an academy order to bring The Royal Harbour Academy into this multi-academy trust. To date, CAT has been unable to enter into a full funding agreement because of unresolved financial issues.
- While the school remains legally a foundation school, which therefore falls within the responsibility of the local authority, CAT has invested considerable resources to support a range of strategic and operational functions of the school. Over the last year, in particular, this has focused on improving the quality of educational provision. CAT describes the school as an 'associate member' of the multi-academy trust. This relationship is recognised by the regional schools commissioner, who holds CAT to account for the school's effectiveness, and the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also above the national average.
- Over 50 percent of pupils in the school are disadvantaged pupils and supported through the pupil premium. This is well above the national average.
- A very small number of pupils attend hair and beauty courses part-time at Thanet College. A small number of pupils in Years 9 and 10 attend the pupil referral unit, Enterprise Learning Alliance.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors first visited the school on 12 and 13 June 2018. Through no fault of the school, Ofsted deemed that further evidence was required to secure the inspection judgements. Two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors visited the school on 12 July 2018 to gather more evidence about the school’s overall effectiveness, particularly related to the effectiveness of 16 to 19 programmes of study and leaders’ capacity to bring about necessary improvements.
- Inspectors observed learning in 58 lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. Some of these lessons were visited jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors met with pupils in arranged meetings, in lessons and informally around the school. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils’ written work across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders, as well as representatives of the governing body. Meetings were held with representatives of Kent local authority and members of CAT, including the executive headteacher.
- A range of school documentation was scrutinised, including the school’s policies. Inspectors reviewed the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plan as well as external reports written by the local authority. They also looked at records relating to current pupils’ progress and attendance, as well as behaviour and exclusion logs. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to CAT’s work with the school.
- Inspectors reviewed 72 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and 62 responses from parents on Ofsted’s free-text service. They also took account of the responses from the staff and pupils’ online questionnaires.

Inspection team

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|---|-------------------------|
| Caroline Walshe, lead inspector (June 2018) | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sue Cox (June 2018) | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gerard Strong (June 2018) | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jennifer Bray (June 2018) | Ofsted Inspector |
| Matthew Haynes, lead inspector (July 2018) | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Gary Holden (July 2018) | Her Majesty’s Inspector |

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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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