

# King Edward VI Church of England Voluntary Controlled Upper School

Grove Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3BH

## Inspection dates

5–6 March 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has guided the school skilfully through changing times, while bringing about significant improvements. This is no mean feat.
- The sixth form is well led. A broad curriculum and extensive enrichment programme prepare students well for the next stage of their lives.
- The high-quality extra-curricular programme and pastoral care give pupils an extremely well-rounded education. Pupils play a full and meaningful part in church and community life.
- Pupils behave well. They embody the core values of respect, aspiration and creativity.
- Leaders monitor teaching and learning well. Staff benefit from useful training that allows them to develop their craft.
- Overwhelmingly, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting activities that enthuse pupils, helping them to learn well.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe. Parents and carers agree. Bullying is rare and dealt with well if it does happen.
- Governors monitor the work of leaders well. They have a clear understanding of the school's key priorities.
- Senior leaders know their school well. They can accurately assess the school's effectiveness and provide strong leadership across all areas.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. Examples of 'courageous advocacy' highlight how they stand up for and support each other admirably.
- Leaders and governors adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the hearing impairment unit, pupils receive excellent support to help them learn.
- Middle leaders are an emerging strength. They know relative strengths and weaknesses and have credible improvement plans in place.
- Last year, pupils' progress improved across the curriculum. They achieved significantly above national averages in a number of subject areas.
- Leaders' clear actions have improved pupils' attendance across most groups. There are, however, a core group of disadvantaged pupils who continue to attend less well.
- In a few subjects, learning is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs. Pupils lose concentration and make less progress.

## Full report

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

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - making sure that teachers consistently match learning precisely to pupils' needs so that a small core group, particularly boys in lower years, maintain concentration better and achieve more.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - increasing the attendance and reducing the levels of persistence absence of disadvantaged pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has skilfully guided the school through a period of considerable turmoil. Extensive work linked to intake changes has required different curriculum models, changes to pastoral systems and additional staff training. These have been made very smoothly. He has managed this highly emotive issue with the local community sensitively, while driving significant school improvements.
- The highly effective senior leadership team is a strength of the school. The new leadership model provides greater clarity regarding responsibilities. Leaders' range of valuable experience and varied skills are well matched to their roles. They assess the school's effectiveness clearly and accurately.
- Leaders and governors know this is a good school. They know the school well and can talk confidently about strengths, weaknesses, key priorities, actions taken, and the impact of these actions seen so far. The development plan clearly monitors their progress against their targets and helps leaders to adjust their priorities accordingly.
- The significant changes at both senior and middle leadership level have been managed well. New staff have settled in quickly. Middle leaders know their departments well. Heads of college know their pupils well. Both know what needs doing to make further improvements. They are well supported by senior leaders. As one stated, 'We have been shown a remarkable amount of kindness and support from other leaders.'
- The increased focus on the curriculum and achieving excellent teaching is effectively led and proving successful. The clear desire to maintain a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activities provides fantastic opportunities for pupils. The school's core values of respect, aspiration and creativity are woven carefully throughout the curriculum. Inspectors saw students totally mesmerised at the 'crime conference', where the openness of the visiting speakers gave a valuable insight into what happens if you break the law. These values and opportunities provide the moral fabric that help pupils to become respected members of the community and embrace fundamental British values.
- Pupils value highly the incredibly wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. This is a significant strength of the school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the debating club, the choral singers, the Arts Award, dance, music, drama, the Shanghai leadership trips and a wide range of sporting activities. Leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils receive a well-rounded education is also reflected in the extensive church and community links. Events like 'Bury in Bloom', the spring concert, and 'Crimson Glory' help pupils develop empathy, confidence and self-esteem particularly well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is catered for extremely well. Leaders promote the values of 'courageous advocacy' where pupils are encouraged to speak up and protect the rights of others who feel unable to speak up for themselves. Through their actions, pupils have helped others overcome problems such as 'period poverty'. They have also facilitated greater understanding and awareness of pupils who

are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

- Leaders monitor teaching and learning well. Staff benefit from useful training that equips them with the necessary skills to do their job well. The newly formed teaching and learning group helps leaders to identify key areas where training could improve practice further.
- Leaders actively seek to develop staff by, among other things, enabling them to study for external qualifications. Staff appreciate the support they are given to develop professionally and ultimately to help pupils make better progress.
- Leaders take staff well-being very seriously and have set up a group to focus on how this could be even better. Staff appreciate this and as one said, 'The school practice is good, but developments are under way to make it excellent.'
- Leaders' use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has led to significant improvements. Staff are acutely aware of – and employ a range of strategies to help pupils overcome – any barriers to learning. There is now a more balanced approach to pastoral and academic support, helping pupils to attend more often and achieve well. However, there is still a core group of pupils who do not attend enough, which has a detrimental effect on their progress.
- Pupils are more fluent in their reading because leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding effectively. However, some pupils are not so confident in their comprehension skills.
- Leaders monitor the support provided for pupils with SEND effectively. Across the school, the clear systems and processes help staff identify pupils' needs quickly and provide effective support to help them.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the work staff do to support their children. One parental comment that echoed the sentiment of many others was: 'Teaching staff have given their free time regularly to help. Any concerns I have are dealt with promptly and efficiently. I feel the pastoral care, staff and leadership at this school are exemplary. The choice of extra-curricular activities is amazing.'

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors assess their respective strengths and access appropriate training to fill any gaps they identify. Consequently, they bring a wide range of valuable skills and desirable experience to their roles. Crucially, governors have supported leaders well through the transitional changes at the school.
- Different governors hold responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. Through regular visits, meetings and checks they monitor the school's effectiveness and discharge their statutory duties well. Governors have a clear vision for the school and talk knowingly about the school's key priorities.
- The revised governance structure is more closely aligned to the new leadership structure and leads to sharper monitoring and greater accountability.
- Governors' minutes show that they increasingly provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is well managed and well led. Leaders keep detailed records and have clear systems in place to help keep pupils safe. All staff spoken with during the inspection were confident on how to report concerns and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. The link safeguarding governor works closely with staff to make sure that safeguarding processes remain effective.
- Staff follow up issues quickly and efficiently. Leaders work closely and effectively with wider agencies to meet vulnerable pupils' needs well.
- Leaders are aware of current issues externally and local issues, such as county lines. They arrange assemblies and use a range of visitors so that pupils are made aware of any potential risks to their safety.
- Leaders have appropriate risk assessments in place, helping pupils to remain safe.
- The single central record is compliant and lists all the necessary pre-employment checks undertaken on staff to help keep pupils safe.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection, and those that completed the online survey, unequivocally say that they feel safe. Parents agree.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Highly effective practice is seen across a range of subject areas. Staff are adventurous in their choice of activities and allow pupils to take control of their learning. They organise extension tasks that allow pupils to investigate, helping them to develop their curiosity, knowledge and understanding extremely well.
- Teachers use a range of methods to ensure that planned work meets pupils' needs precisely. Pupils leave their books in different piles depending on how secure they feel on a topic. Teachers then adapt the learning in subsequent lessons. Those who are struggling get more help and teachers provide additional challenge for more confident pupils.
- Teachers use questioning to check whether pupils understand the work well. In the best cases, this includes secondary questions to elicit more information and make sure that pupils understand the reasoning behind their answers. Teachers then skilfully explain difficult concepts to help pupils address any misconceptions they might have.
- Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils' high-quality debating skills are seen across the curriculum, but notably in philosophy and ethics. Their discussions about complex issues linked to the Christian faith help pupils to explore their own ideas and challenge preconceptions.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well, meaning pupils benefit from a variety of exciting activities that capture their interest. Inspectors saw innovative and creative lessons that keep pupils focused and alert. These included pupils' faces randomly appearing on the screen to decide who should answer a question next in French, or decoding messages linked to quadratic equations in mathematics.

- Additional adults provide very effective and personalised support. Staff are involved at the pre-planning stage and this allows them to collate useful resources to help pupils, many with SEND, to be successful in their learning.
- The clarity of teacher instruction and consistent reinforcement of technical vocabulary help pupils learn well. In a complex scientific experiment, pupils could talk knowingly about synapses.
- In more practical subjects, including dance, drama, music and physical education, pupils develop leadership skills well. Planned activities are closely based on pupils' individual starting points. Pupils discuss complex ideas, and good use of peer questioning helps them to recall prior learning well.
- Books are generally well presented and show that pupils take a pride in their work and make good progress over time. In many subjects, pupils receive valuable guidance on how to improve their work.
- Overwhelmingly, pupils display positive attitudes to learning. There are some inconsistencies where the work is either too easy or too difficult. Pupils in these lessons, mainly boys in the lower years, lose concentration and their progress weakens.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have set up 'First Base', a resource to support pupils with identified needs to help them to be successful in their learning. Pupils, some with complex needs, appreciate this safe space where they can grow in confidence and build self-esteem. While this provides a valuable alternative for vulnerable pupils, the monitoring and analysis of who is using the base is not sharp enough.
- All the pupils spoken with during the inspection were unequivocal that they feel safe and are taught how to stay safe. They say that the high-quality pastoral support and college system means there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare, and teachers deal with it well if it does happen. Almost all staff, parents and pupils who responded to Ofsted's official surveys agree.
- Staff are proactive in making checks on any pupils who attend alternative provision. They maintain good relationships with providers and make sure that pupils attend well and make good progress. Pupils are well supported, helping them to re-engage in education.
- The breadth and variety of opportunities is extraordinary, helping pupils to develop socially and academically extremely well. Both pupils and parents value these opportunities highly. Many highlight the exceptional music department and the fantastic band, orchestra, ensembles and chorales. Others are equally positive about how clubs or societies, including debating, sports, arts, drama, productions, Latin, magistrates' law, and Mandarin provide such a well-rounded education.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave very well. They are polite, listen to their teachers, move from lesson to lesson quickly and quietly and work hard. There is very little disruption in classes because staff have adapted well to the changing dynamics of the school, where Year 7 and Year 8 pupils are still a relatively new feature.
- Pupils are kind and respectful towards each other. The behaviour policy is founded on the school's core values alongside clearer processes for managing behaviour. It brings a good balance of rewards and sanctions and is summed up perfectly by the Year 11 hashtag, '#workhardbehind'.
- Pupils' attendance dipped last year. Leaders know the reasons behind the drop and have effective processes in place to improve attendance. These are bearing fruit and the overall attendance figure is now broadly in line with the national average. There is still a core group of disadvantaged pupils who attend less well. Improving this remains a key priority for the school.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors noted that pupils were sociable, confident and articulate. They are extremely proud of their school, with good reason. There are a few pupils who sometimes make bad choices. However, staff analyse behavioural incidents closely and can pinpoint and address any issues quickly. Fixed-term exclusions are used judiciously and are below the national average, with few repeat offenders.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Across the curriculum, pupils achieve well. Learning is well sequenced and builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Teachers help pupils to expand their knowledge and vocabulary and enhance their skills effectively. The work in pupils' books over a range of subjects shows they make good progress over time.
- Pupils' progress has been broadly in line with the national average. Standards are improving and last year, pupils' progress was better than the national average in many subjects, including English, mathematics, science and humanities.
- In the practical subjects, pupils make good progress. Results in media are consistently very strong. Pupils in this subject, and physical education, dance, music and drama are all able to show significant improvement in their levels of expertise through their work, interactions, involvement and performances.
- In the hearing impairment unit, staff are equipped with the skills and confidence to support a group of very vulnerable pupils well. Skilled and determined leadership, alongside specialist teachers using sign-supported English, helps pupils make very good progress from their different starting points.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving rapidly. The additional funding is helping these pupils achieve far better. There is still a difference compared with other pupils nationally, often linked to those who attend less well.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their different starting points. Additional adults are well trained and provide useful support that guides these pupils effectively

on how to succeed.

- The library is a calm and pleasant area. It is well stocked with a range of books that pupils enjoy reading. It opens before school and is used well. Staff use the 'drop everything and read' sessions to encourage pupils to read more widely and often. These sessions have mixed success because some pupils do not read books that are appropriately matched to their reading levels.
- Pupils receive useful careers guidance through a one-to-one interview, alongside careers fairs, assemblies, employer talks, visits from other providers and workshops. The strong links the school has forged with local employers provide opportunities for pupils to gain experience of work. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. The school is well on track to meet the government careers strategy benchmarks by the 2020 deadline.
- Leaders know that boys have not achieved as well as girls over time. While last year's results show improvement, this remains a key focus area.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- The highly effective sixth-form leader has helped create a culture of high aspiration and sixth-form staff share the vision. Students are encouraged and guided well so they become adept at managing their time and taking responsibility for their own learning. As one student said, 'It's a very good bridge from lower school to university.'
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to carefully plan and sequence learning. Coupled with high expectations, excellent questioning and clear explanations, students consolidate learning well.
- Compared with the national average, students make good progress from their starting points. Students who enter the sixth form with low prior attainment do even better.
- Sixth-form students act as mentors to younger pupils. They provide valuable support, helping these pupils to make better progress. Year 11 pupils spoken with during the inspection were extremely grateful for the help they receive and notice how it has helped them to improve.
- Students are incredibly proud of their sixth form and appreciate the wide range of enrichment activities from which to choose. The extended project qualification, debating society, the social and May Ball committees, and the student magazine help students develop leadership opportunities while gaining useful work-related skills.
- Students say that they are well supported, well taught and well cared for. Evidence collected on inspection confirmed this to be the case. Assemblies and conferences keep students aware of potential risks to their well-being, including driving, alcohol, drugs and mental health.
- The proportion of students completing their courses has risen steeply and is in line with the national average.
- Specialist teachers of English and mathematics help students well, enabling most to gain a good GCSE in their retakes.
- Leaders in the sixth form ensure that students are very effectively prepared for the



next stage of their education, employment or training journey. Students say that they receive mock interviews, help with applications, personal statements, and good advice that allow them to make well-informed decisions on what to do next. Many continue into higher education and the proportion entering prestigious universities is high.

- Students are confident, articulate and altruistic. They carry out a range of activities to benefit others, such as dress-up days and the shoe box appeal. This enables students to support local charities and help others less fortunate than themselves.

## School details

Unique reference number	124856
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10057797

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	1573
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harriet Elliss
Headteacher	Lee Walker
Telephone number	01284 761393
Website	<a href="http://www.king-ed.suffolk.sch.uk">www.king-ed.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@king-ed.suffolk.sch.uk">admin@king-ed.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2013

## Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized secondary school and has grown over recent years owing to the addition of Year 7 and Year 8 pupils in 2016.
- There have been significant leadership changes over the last two years. These include a new headteacher, a second deputy headteacher, a change of assistant headteacher, new heads of college, new subject leaders and a new chair of governors.
- Following agreement in 2015, the school's sixth form will cease to admit Year 12 students from the end of this academic year and will close in 2020. The school will become an 11–16 school. A new sixth-form centre run by Suffolk Academies Trust will

open adjacent to the school.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be entitled to the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- A few pupils are educated in off-site, registered alternative provision at West Suffolk College, Olive Academy, Albany PRU and Hampden House PRU.
- A specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND opened in September 2016. It caters for seven pupils who have hearing impairments. All pupils are placed by the local authority and have education, health and care plans.
- King Edward V1 is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School and received its most recent section 48 inspection in January 2019. The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) report judged the impact of collective worship and overall effectiveness to be good.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed pupils' learning in 78 lessons, covering a wide range of lessons across all year groups. All observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- A tour of the school was made with the headteacher.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day and around the site were made. The internal exclusion centre and the resource centre for pupils with identified needs were visited and checked.
- The inspection team looked carefully at the quality of work in pupils' books to assess progress and teaching over time.
- The inspection team considered the 193 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, together with 192 written responses, the 74 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 77 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team met with the chair of the governing body, three other governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, pastoral leaders, a group of staff and five different groups of pupils. Inspectors observed a wide range of school activities, including assembly and form time.
- Inspectors held telephone conversations with the local authority standards and effectiveness officer and with staff from alternative provider establishments.
- The inspection team analysed the school's self-evaluation documentation, development plan, governors' minutes, school policies and progress information.
- Inspectors examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils in the school.

## Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Leach	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Tooze	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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