

# Inspection of The Ebbsfleet Academy

Southfleet Road, Swanscombe, Kent DA10 0BZ

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Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>                 |
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| The quality of education                     | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Behaviour and attitudes                      | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Personal development                         | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Leadership and management                    | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Sixth-form provision                         | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good                        |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are cared for well and respected. Staff expect the best from all pupils and are ambitious for them. Pupils know this and most enjoy learning. Leaders want pupils to be independent and resilient. The careful planning of the curriculum is helping pupils to achieve this.

Teachers expect pupils to behave well. They deal quickly with poor behaviour. Pupils understand clearly the consequences if they misbehave. They move calmly around the school, are punctual to lessons and courteous to visitors. Pupils take pride in their work and their school. In lessons, they listen to each other and usually work hard.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils know who to go to if they are worried or have concerns. Much of this focuses on the theme of the 'Ebbsfleet family' and leaders' commitment to offering a 'home from home'. As a result, pupils feel safe at school.

Pupils value mutual respect and celebrate difference. They say that bullying is rare and when it does happen, teachers sort it out quickly. Many pupils take part in the activities and clubs on offer. They happily take on extra responsibilities, involving themselves in the school community.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school is well led and managed. The new principal leads with determination and passion. She places the education and personal development of the pupils in her care at the heart of everything she does. Leaders have well-designed plans in place to continue to improve the school.

Leaders recognise how important it is that pupils learn a wide range of subjects for as long as possible. Pupils now make choices about their GCSE subjects in Year 9, instead of in Year 8. In the past, the number of pupils studying either geography or history and a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11 was low. Leaders' actions have strengthened the planning and teaching of these subjects. As a result, more pupils are now choosing to study them at key stage 4.

Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils need to know and understand. They have been meticulous in making sure that new learning is ordered in a logical sequence. Teachers then use a broad range of resources to help to explain new ideas and bring learning to life. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught so that they can draw on this knowledge in the future.

In the past, teachers did not make sure that pupils fully understood the mathematics they were studying. Curriculum plans now include more opportunities for pupils to think carefully about why they are using different processes when they solve mathematical problems. Leaders are working with teachers to make sure that all

staff deliver this curriculum well.

Leaders understand that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may have additional challenges with their learning. They consider how best to support these pupils and share information with teachers. However, sometimes, the curriculum is not adapted well enough to help them learn. Leaders have identified this and taken action. As a result, teachers are now planning to help these pupils gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop their personal skills and to understand the world around them. They are shown how to become respectful, confident and healthy citizens. Leaders have thought hard about the breadth of topics covered. Pupils learn about issues ranging from rights and responsibilities to the economy and finance. In addition, pupils receive lots of information to help them make choices about their future.

Governors do not scrutinise leaders' decisions in enough detail. In particular, they have not checked that the right things are being done to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They have also not fully considered how expertise from the multi-academy trust could be used to benefit pupils.

In the sixth form, students do not achieve highly enough. Leaders have made changes to the range of subjects they offer to better reflect students' needs and interests. However, they have not managed these changes well enough. Leaders have not made sure that some teachers have a sufficiently deep knowledge of the courses that they teach. This means that pupils' learning is not always well planned. Sometimes, pupils are not able to quickly gain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are confident that staff will look after them. They learn how to stay safe and therefore feel safe. Leaders' actions prioritise the well-being and welfare of pupils. This has created a strong, caring culture across the school.

Staff have detailed training in safeguarding when they join the school and this is updated regularly. As a result, they are very aware of the potential risks to pupils. They are clear about what to do if they have concerns and report these swiftly. Leaders' persistence in working with relevant agencies helps pupils get the support they need.

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

## **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Overall, pupils enjoy a curriculum that is coherent and sequenced well. However, in a few instances, teachers are not considering carefully enough how they adapt their teaching to implement these plans. Therefore, leaders should make sure that all teachers have the deep curriculum knowledge and skills to enable them to check pupils' understanding. This is especially pertinent to mathematics.
- In some subjects, curriculum plans do not consider the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND face. This hinders the progress of these pupils. Leaders have already taken action and are bringing about the necessary changes. This also extends to the wider curriculum, with leaders now ensuring that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are participating fully in school clubs and trips.
- Those responsible for governance must question leaders more robustly and hold them to account more readily over the impact of their actions, especially in regard to the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum and teaching in the sixth form is effective. Teachers need to have the necessary training to develop the skills and knowledge required for the courses they teach. Leaders should then make sure that they monitor the quality of teaching rigorously and that swift action is taken to make any necessary improvements.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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|---|--|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 137581   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Kent   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10111101   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Secondary comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 11 to 18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 680  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 62   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Mr Ian Daker   |
| <b>Principal</b>                                  | Ms Gurjit Kaur Shergill  |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.theebbsfleetacademy.kent.sch.uk">www.theebbsfleetacademy.kent.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 27–28 September 2016   |

## Information about this school

- The new principal took up post in September 2019.
- The school has offered sixth-form provision to students since September 2017.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the principal, vice-principals and other leaders, teaching and support staff, pupils, the chief executive of the multi-academy trust, the chair of trustees and the chair of the academy council.
- Inspectors looked closely at English, history, mathematics, science and design technology as part of the inspection. Inspection activities included discussions with curriculum leaders, scrutinising curriculum plans, lesson visits, discussions with pupils about their learning and the scrutiny of their work.

- Inspectors checked the single central record to make sure that all the required checks on staff had taken place. They also scrutinised school policies and procedures to ensure that all processes were effective. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and other pastoral staff to ensure that these policies were being translated effectively into practice.
- Inspectors also visited the school's lighthouse provision, observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and had further discussions with a range of pupils.

### **Inspection team**

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ian Tustian, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Paul Murphy                 | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Steve Baker                 | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Matthew Newberry            | Her Majesty's Inspector |

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