

Inspection of The King Edmund School

Vaughan Close, Rochford, Essex SS4 1TL

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

The headteacher of this school is Jonathan Osborn. This school is not part of a multi-academy trust. It is a single academy trust, which means the school is run by the headteacher, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Malcolm MacDonald.

What is it like to attend this school?

King Edmund School pupils have experienced exceptional levels of disruption, because of building works. This has not been the school's fault. School closures have recurred since the pandemic. Pupils learn on a building site, partly in temporary classrooms. Despite this, they value and enjoy school. Pupils praise the strong support they get from leaders and staff.

Pupils learn a well-designed curriculum. They build up what they know. Examination outcomes have been low, for both Year 11s and sixth formers. These have been affected by school closures, and do not reflect the school's quality of education. Pupils receive relentless support from leaders in moving on to positive destinations.

Behaviour is orderly. In lessons, pupils take pride in their learning. They behave well throughout the day. Pupils are polite and respectful, including in the sixth form. Occasional instances of unkind language are dealt with thoroughly. Pupils are happy and safe.

Personal development is wide-ranging. Pupils go on exciting trips, locally and internationally. Multiple clubs, for instance jewellery, debating and musical theatre, extend their learning. Many take on leadership roles. Sixth-form students are good role models and get involved in school life. These opportunities help develop pupils' character, such as their resilience.

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

The school has maintained and developed the quality of its provision while managing the significant challenges with its buildings. The discovery of asbestos in November 2022 led to a nine-week closure. However, leaders skilfully negotiated the widescale difficulties of providing safe and appropriate education. The disruption, on top of previous closures, took its toll on the school. But leaders, governors, staff and pupils have faced these obstacles courageously and well.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs. For example, students in the sixth form learn a wide range of courses. Subject leaders ensure the content is relevant. Pupils learn, for instance, about local geography and artists. The curriculum ensures pupils in most subjects develop detailed and rich knowledge. They confidently apply in different situations the subject-specific vocabulary they learn. While this is the case, partly because of school closures, pupils in a few areas have gaps in their learning. As a result, they sometimes do not have the prior knowledge to learn new content confidently. This affects their progress in aspects such as mathematical reasoning and practical science.

Mostly, the curriculum is delivered effectively. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In the sixth form, this means students explore learning with depth. Teachers use well-considered activities that help pupils remember the most important content. Skilful questioning enables teachers to correct misconceptions.

However, on occasion, teachers model and explain learning less successfully. Pupils want to do well and find this frustrating.

The school values reading. Pupils regularly read high-quality texts and enjoy them. Weaker readers get the support they need. This improves their literacy and helps them understand what they learn across the curriculum.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to be successful. Leaders and staff work closely with parents to build up a detailed picture of pupils' needs. Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. Staff, including in the sixth form, are well-trained in how to support pupils with SEND. This means the right support is put in place at the right time. These pupils access the curriculum and produce high-quality work.

There are high expectations for behaviour. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. The number of sanctions, such as suspensions, has risen, but these are used appropriately. Pupils respond to clear routines and conduct themselves well. Disruption to learning is uncommon and managed successfully.

In most cases, pupils have high attendance. However, the work to help the most vulnerable pupils' attendance is not as effective as it could be. Some of these pupils miss too much school and this affects their quality of education.

The school's values are at the heart of the effective personal development programme. Pupils develop a rich understanding of important issues such as county lines and consent. They discuss with maturity their understanding of others from different communities and contexts. The curriculum educates pupils from Year 7 to 13 well about career options.

Trustees have the knowledge and skills they need for their roles. They have done a huge amount of work to support the school through the disruption to provision. Trustees know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They challenge leaders as they should where needed. For example, trustees ask robust questions regarding the curriculum. The trust board oversees safeguarding closely and effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils have gaps in some areas of their learning. This is in large part due to school closures. However, it means they do not always have the prior knowledge they need to access new learning securely. The school needs to ensure it identifies these gaps thoroughly and addresses them effectively.

- In a few areas, pupils learn a curriculum that is less well delivered. In these cases, pupils build up their learning less confidently. The school should ensure that staff get the training and support they need to deliver the curriculum consistently and well.
- The school's work to help the attendance of some of the most vulnerable pupils is not effective enough. As a result, some of these pupils have high levels of absence, and miss too much of their education. The school should review its actions to support the attendance of vulnerable pupils, ensuring pupils' attendance improves.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136868 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10288492 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,432 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 257 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Malcolm MacDonald |
| Headteacher | Jonathan Osborn |
| Website | http://www.kes.essex.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 06 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school has experienced a number of high-level disruptions due to building works. In particular, nearly half the site was closed after the pandemic, due to renovation needs. In November 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) told the school to close because of asbestos, and the school remained shut for nine weeks. On site, pupils have been learning in temporary classrooms and amidst ongoing building work for an extended period of time. The effect of this disruption is described and evaluated in the report. The completed, new building should be ready in 2025.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils. A few pupils also receive out-of-school educational support, such as tutoring through Essex and Southend-on-Sea local authorities' tuition services.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and

engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- The school has a shorter than usual school day, which is below the DfE guidance of 32 and a half hours. The school's aim is to create a finishing time that supports some pupils travelling from a wide area, and that fits in with the transport needs of other local schools. Leaders plan to review this moving forwards.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, staff, and pupils. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met with two trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, physical education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects, in particular music and personal, social and health education, and range of subjects offered in the sixth form.
- As part of evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, school development plans, policies and documentation for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 169 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 165 free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. They considered the 119 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and the 115 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Charlie Fordham, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Polly Lankester | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sally Nutman | Ofsted Inspector |

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Ofsted Inspector

Susan Sutton

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