

Inspection of King Ethelbert School

Canterbury Road, Birchington, Kent CT7 9BL

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The headteacher of this school is Tom Sellen. This school is part of Coastal Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Kate Greig, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dave Roberts.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's core values of ASPIRE (attitude, success, pride, inspire resilience and enterprise) underpin all aspects of school life. Pupils uphold these values and respond well to the school's expectations of them. The school have designed a curriculum to ensure that there is ambition for all pupils.

The high-quality pastoral support on offer to all pupils is based on the positive relationships between staff and pupils. There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The vast majority respond well to these. Classrooms are mostly calm and orderly. During social times, pupils behave well and are respectful and polite. Pupils are safe here and know who to talk to if they need help or guidance. They say that on rare occasions bullying does occur, but teachers are quick to intervene and act on concerns raised.

Pupils' talents and interests are nurtured through the wide range of enrichment clubs on offer. These include chess, science, netball and tennis clubs that are well-attended. Some pupils take part in 'student voice' and take on roles such as anti-bullying and wellbeing ambassadors. Staff recognise the importance of pupils' deepening their knowledge of different cultures and faiths. Work is underway to strengthen this to ensure pupils understanding of diversity.

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

The school is committed to offering a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At key stage 4, the curriculum offers pupils the chance to study the full range of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. Pupils benefit from studying a range of academic and creative subjects which are well-matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils achieve well in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

In many subjects, the curriculum has been carefully planned so that it is clear what pupils will learn. However, in a small number of other subjects, the curriculum is still in the process of being developed. In these subjects, the key knowledge and order that pupils will learn is not always precisely identified. This means that teachers are not always clear on what should be taught and when and pupils' learning is variable.

Teachers are experts in their subject areas and have secure subject knowledge. They mostly explain new learning clearly. Effective questioning is used to check pupils' understanding of key knowledge. Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils. This helps pupils to improve their work and address gaps in learning. In the subjects where this is done well, most pupils achieve well in published outcomes.

While a range of strategies are used to help pupils learn, they are not always effectively implemented to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with SEND. While the needs of these pupils are identified and shared with staff, they do not consistently get the support they need to learn as effectively as they could.

The school is developing a culture of reading. Pupils read carefully selected books during structured tutor sessions. There is a keen focus on supporting pupils who find reading more difficult. A range of interventions are beginning to be implemented to support these pupils. As a result, their reading confidence and fluency is improving.

Pupils' polite and respectful conduct creates a calm atmosphere in lessons. Learning mostly takes place without disruption. At social times, pupils interact joyfully with their peers and with staff. On small occasions, if pupils do not meet the behaviour expectations, they receive effective support to help them address this. Some pupils feel that incidents of bullying are not dealt with as consistently in school. Where bullying incidents are reported to the school appropriate action takes place.

Most pupils attend school well. They enjoy being rewarded for their good attendance. There are, however, some pupils who do not attend as regularly meaning they miss out on aspects of their learning. The school is aware of this and continues to provide extra support for these pupils.

Pupils are given thoughtful opportunities to learn about healthy relationships, consent and how to keep themselves safe online. The personal, social and health education programme is well considered. Topics are sensitively taught in an age-appropriate way. Careers education effectively raises pupils' awareness of different pathways for their future aspirations. These aspects of the school's provision help to ready pupils for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not consistently organised in a precise, logical sequence. As a result, not all pupils learn as much as they could. The school should continue developing its curriculum in these subject areas by identifying the essential knowledge it intends pupils to learn and the order of learning to support pupils' achievements.
- In some subjects, lesson activities are not always helping all pupils learn well, particularly pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils are not building their knowledge and skills to ensure they can achieve well. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise they need to help all pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

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

Unique reference number	136584
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296354
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	757
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dave Roberts
CEO of trust	Kate Greig
Headteacher	Tom Sellen
Website	www.kingethelbert.com
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2018

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Coastal Academies Trust.
- The academy 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 educational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and the chair of the local governing board.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, mathematics, English, modern foreign languages, performing arts and history. In each subject, the inspector met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's curriculum were also considered.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and trustees' minutes.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text comments that were submitted. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Numerana Anwar, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Aretha Banton	Ofsted Inspector
Judy Rider	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Greene	Ofsted Inspector

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