



# King Edward VI Church of England Voluntary Controlled Upper School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 124856  
**LEA** SUFFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 281827  
**Inspection dates** 23 March 2006 to 24 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Melanie Kavanagh LI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Grove Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		IP33 3BH
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01284 761393
<b>Number on roll</b>	1322	<b>Fax number</b>	01284 767474
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.Graham Shorter
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Geoff Barton

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

King Edward VI Upper School is a voluntary controlled Church of England mixed comprehensive school for students aged 13-18. The school has specialist status in sports and training. The school is larger than the average secondary school. Approximately 92% of students are from White British backgrounds, with the remainder of students coming from different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The school is situated in the market town of Bury St Edmunds.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is providing a good education overall. Achievement and standards are good and students make good progress. Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that standards at Key Stage 4 should be further improved, particularly in modern foreign languages and humanities. Attendance is satisfactory and behaviour and punctuality are good. The school provides good care, guidance and support. Students feel safe and well supported. Many students participate in extra-curricular activities including sport, art and charitable work. Sixth form students achieve well, provide good role models for younger students and take an active part in the life of the school. The school works very well with other agencies to promote the well being of its students. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire provided strong support for the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good and some is outstanding. Teachers provide good opportunities for activity and participation in lessons and students respond with enthusiasm and skill. Able students are very well supported and their talents extended effectively. However, not all teachers make sufficient use of individual education plans (IEPs) to support and extend the achievement of students with learning difficulties or disabilities. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology (ICT) in many lessons and students receive limited ICT teaching. Working relationships between staff and students are good. The curriculum provided by the school is good and there has been a considerable and beneficial impact from its specialist status as a sports and training school. The school has maintained the high standards identified at the last inspection and brought about considerable improvements in accommodation for sports and the arts. Much of the school is, however, inaccessible for students with restricted mobility. Leadership and management are good. The regular reviews and lesson observations undertaken by the school are rigorous and self critical. Decisive action is taken where weaknesses are identified. However, the school's recent self-evaluation was less rigorous than the routine self-evaluation activities undertaken and awarded overgenerous grades in some areas. The school has a good capacity to improve and provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are good. Students achieve well and make good progress. Standards in English, science, drama and physical education are particularly high. Teaching is good with well planned and interesting lessons. Teachers have high expectations and encourage successfully a strong work ethic. Students are well motivated, mature and co-operative. They make a strong contribution to the life of the school. The sixth form curriculum provides a wide range of advanced level courses and a small number of vocational options. Students participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including debating, music and art. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good and demonstrate drive and commitment. However, the grades awarded in the school's self evaluation were over

generous and failed to take into account sufficiently the prior attainment of sixth form students.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A\*-C is further improved. - Rigorously monitor the progress of students with learning difficulties or disabilities through effective use of IEPs. - Ensure that the school's self-evaluation is as rigorous and self critical as the regular reviews undertaken.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The overall achievement of students is good. Students join the school in Year 9 with above average attainment and make exceptionally good progress in English and science and good progress in mathematics. The percentage of students achieving 5 GCSE passes at grades A\*-C has been well above the national average for a number of years. In particular, students achieve very well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, the school failed to meet its target percentage of students achieving high grade passes at GCSE in 2005, and the proportion of students achieving high grades has remained at about the same level for several years. The school has identified the need for further improvements at GCSE, particularly in modern foreign languages and humanities. Decisive and effective action has been taken to bring about these improvements and inspectors judged that most students are making good progress in their work and lessons. Students enter the sixth form with above average attainment, make good progress and achieve high standards overall. There were particularly good results at GCE 'A' level in 2004 in subjects, including business studies, drama, chemistry, music and physical education. However, in the same year, GCE 'A' level students achieved a below average number of passes at high grades in mathematics, geography and ICT. In 2005, 78% of sixth form students progressed to higher education. Students with statements of special educational needs made less progress in 2005, than other students. Whilst a number of factors beyond the school's control influenced these results, the school has taken vigorous action and inspectors judged that the progress of these students is now good. Most students are well motivated and work hard in their lessons. They are particularly good at presentations and express themselves confidently when answering questions and taking part in discussions.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well being of students is good, with some outstanding features. Most students behave well and the effective management of any misbehaviour means that learning is rarely disrupted. Students enjoy their learning and are proud to be associated with the school. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Most students attend well, but overall attendance

figures are only satisfactory, depressed by a few students who are persistently absent. Students respond especially well to the many opportunities they are given to take the lead in school activities. They contribute willingly to the school council, sports and arts programmes. Older students provide good role models and support for younger students. Students have very good moral and social development but spiritual and cultural development is not as strong. Often, tutor time and assemblies do not give students sufficient time to reflect and explore inner feelings. There is particularly good promotion of culture through art, music and drama but the extending of students' understanding of the diversity of communities is an area for further development. Students understand how to keep themselves safe and to whom they should turn if they are worried about bullying. Knowledge of how to live a healthy life is excellent. The school has been successful in encouraging students to eat healthily and be involved in sports and fitness. Community participation is outstanding, and is a strength of the school. Students make a very good contribution to the wider community through their 'Active Citizenship' involvement, work with middle schools and charitable fund raising. Students are given good careers advice and are well prepared for employment and higher education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and some is outstanding. The recently introduced three-lesson-day is used effectively for well structured and interesting lessons. In the many lessons which are at least good, teachers demonstrate expert knowledge of their subjects, have high expectations and clear learning objectives. There are very good working relationships between staff and students. Students participate confidently and enthusiastically in discussions and activities. Learning resources are of high quality, particularly in physical education and the arts. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support individuals and groups of students. Although there is increasing use of interactive whiteboards, there is insufficient use of ICT in learning and students are not sufficiently encouraged to use ICT in their work. Assessment is used well to support learning. Students at risk of underachieving are promptly identified and supported through mentoring and additional support. Most marking is helpful in showing students how to improve their work. Specialist Sports College status has had a major impact on the teaching methodology in physical education and increasingly across the school. The development of peer and self-assessment, together with teamwork and leadership, has raised the quality of learning, motivation and enthusiasm. As a training school, the extensive monitoring and sharing of good practice has also led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum offered by the school is good. In Year 9, additional subjects include drama for all students. Citizenship lessons are provided but there is insufficient time allocated to the teaching of ICT. A very good range of options in Years 10 and 11 gives considerable flexibility of choice, including applied GCSEs in, for example, engineering. Vocational courses with part-time attendance at college are also offered, as well as more traditional academic courses to meet the needs and interests of students. Extra-curricular activities are wide-ranging, well attended and particularly strong in the areas of sport, music and the arts. There is very good provision for the most able students to extend and support their learning. Specialist status in sport has had a considerable impact on the curriculum and the resources for physical education, and has led to very strong links with middle schools. The sixth form has a broad range of options, including a small number of vocational courses

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The good communication with parents and carers allows staff to know the precise personal needs of students. Students are well consulted about school issues and have a strong voice through their School and Year Councils. The school works particularly well with a wide range of outside agencies concerned with the well-being of young people. The requirements for child protection are in place and health and safety procedures are effective. Heads of Year and tutors track and monitor the progress of students well. They have a good overview of students' academic and personal well-being. The school is successful in promoting the self-esteem of students and letting their talents shine. Overall, students with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well by both teachers and teaching assistants. However, not all teachers take sufficient note of targets in individual education plans to ensure that these students receive consistent support well matched to their needs

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. There is a clear vision and mission for the school based on its specialist status and its designation as a training school. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership focused successfully on improving teaching and learning and promoting the well being of the students. A school culture has been established where students and teachers have the confidence to be self critical in order to improve. Faculty reviews are rigorous and accurately identify areas for improvement. The school improvement plan also provides accurate and appropriate areas for development. However, the school's self evaluation was less self critical and awarded over generous grades to the sixth form, care, guidance and support and personal development and well being. A period of change has been well managed and the restructured senior management team reflects the expertise and

experience of its members. Performance monitoring is effective. The school's central focus is on improving the quality of teaching and learning. This is supported effectively by regular and accurate lesson observations. Resources are generally good and are particularly so in the areas of the arts and physical education. However, many of the school's buildings are inaccessible to students with restricted mobility. Students' performance and results are monitored well. There is good use of robust and detailed data to analyse achievement and address any areas of concern. The governing body is well informed and provides both support and challenge to the school. Governors are actively involved in school improvement and financial planning. The school demonstrates that it has a good capacity for further improvement and gives good value for money.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Last week, a small team of inspectors visited your school. We met and talked with many of you and sat in, and watched, your lessons. We also met with your teachers and had letters from your parents. This letter is to tell you about our findings and explain what we think the school does well and how it could be even better. The school offers you a good quality of education. One of its strengths is you. At our meetings, we were impressed with how thoughtful and self confident you were. We noticed in particular your ability to take on the leadership of many activities and the confidence with which you took part in discussions. Your support for clubs and other activities outside school is very good and you have a well developed understanding of how to lead a healthy life. Your participation in sport and fitness is particularly good. You also concentrate well during the longer lessons that have been recently introduced. You are rightly proud of your school and the part you play in the school community. Your school is well managed and teaching is good. Your teachers work hard to make lessons as varied and interesting as possible. One way we think that teaching could be even better is by increasing the use of computers and information and communication technology in lessons. We have also asked the teachers to make sure that where individual education plans are being used, they take very careful note of the targets in them. Most of you achieve good results in your GCSEs, particularly in English, mathematics and science. We have asked the school to make sure that all of you achieve everything of which you are capable in your GCSEs. One of the ways in which you can help is to continue to show the interest and maturity that we noticed on our visit. You told us that there were very few instances of bullying and that you knew where to go for help and support if you were worried. Remember that your teachers will always help and go to them straight away if you, or a friend, need help. We wish you well for the future and hope that you are successful in whatever you want to do.