



# The King Edmund School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 115337  
**Local Authority** ESSEX  
**Inspection number** 290210  
**Inspection date** 6 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Mark Phillips HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Vaughan Close
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Rochford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		Essex SS4 1TL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01702545771
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1530	<b>Fax number</b>	01702549662
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	198		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Dennis Cotgrove
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Abel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 February 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–19	6 March 2007	290210

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The King Edmund School is a large comprehensive school with a relatively small sixth form, located in the Hawkwell South ward of Rochford. Approximately 40% of students are transported to school from rural areas. The social and economic backgrounds of students are just below national average, and fewer come from homes with a tradition of higher education than is normally the case. The great majority of students have a White British heritage and almost all have English as their first language. The number of students eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average, as is the number of students at all levels with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The King Edmund School has been a Business and Enterprise Specialist School since 2002, with redesignation having been granted in September 2006. A second specialism in Vocational Education will take effect from April 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors concur with the school's self-evaluation that the overall effectiveness of The King Edmund School is good and that the school works effectively with the local community, particularly through its Business and Enterprise status.

When they join the school in Year 7, students have academic standards that are broadly in line with national averages. They achieve well and attain above average standards. Their progress in Key Stage 3 is steady; science was the strongest performing subject in 2006 with good and improved results. However, it is in Key Stage 4 that students make most progress, with overall GCSE and GNVQ results leading to exceptionally high value-added performance in 2006 and the school easily exceeding its performance targets for GCSE passes. Within this, the number of students passing the equivalent of five or more higher GCSE grades including English and mathematics was as expected, considering students' starting points.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. A parent wrote to inspectors, 'when our son joined the school, staff and students welcomed him and he quickly felt that he belonged. The school has been a great support and has helped our son to grow emotionally, socially, and in confidence as well as in education.' The school sets clear and firm expectations for behaviour and discipline, and students respond to these expectations very well. Exclusion levels are relatively low and decreasing, and student behaviour seen during the inspection visit was consistently good. The student-led system that the school has developed for dealing with any bullying that occurs is particularly noteworthy in the way that it helps students to feel safe and free from harassment, and their personal development and well-being are good overall.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and manage classes effectively. Students gain most enjoyment from lessons where they take an active, independent role in their learning, and where teachers' assessments help them to improve their work further. Although teaching is good overall, a few lessons are dominated by teacher presentation. In these lessons students are too passive, the assessment of their work is not as thorough, and they do not learn as quickly. The way in which managers monitor the quality of lessons does not focus enough to give an appropriate emphasis on the quality of students' learning as well as the teaching. The good curriculum provides students with an interesting choice of subjects and adds to their enjoyment of school.

A Year 11 student told us, 'I am proud to be a member of this school.' This pride in The King Edmund School starts with the good leadership of the headteacher and his senior team. It is a key factor in creating the school's ethos and it is also manifest in the way that the school's excellent facilities are well-presented and well-cared for. The improvements that have been made in the school's overall results and facilities for learning, together with the clear identification of what needs to be done for the school to move further forward, indicates a good capacity for future improvement.

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

### **Grade: 3**

The school is proud of the fact that it offers an 'open' sixth form. The school encourages all students to consider further education, whatever their circumstances. Students appreciate the way that the school helps their transition from the main school to the sixth form, particularly the liaison between their Year 11 and sixth form tutors. Excellent study and social facilities are provided for the sixth form, and these are also greatly appreciated by students.

There is an outstanding range of academic and vocational courses available to students, with the flexibility to mix and match courses. This enables all students to follow their interests and abilities. Almost all courses can lead onto further education, qualifications or training. The school judges, and inspectors agree, that standards achieved by sixth form students in their courses are broadly average, and value-added scores indicate that they make satisfactory progress with the results that they earn.

Students' personal development is good. As in the main school, the care, guidance, and support given to students is outstanding, particularly for students with specific learning needs.

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

- Raise standards of English and mathematics to the same levels achieved in other subjects.
- Promote consistency of marking throughout the school to give students a better understanding of their own progress and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Strengthen the roles and responsibilities of managers at all levels in monitoring the quality of teaching and its effect on student learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

When they join the school in Year 7, students have academic standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. During Key Stage 3, they make steady progress. Science results showed much improvement in 2006 and progress here was better than in the other core subjects.

The school's overall value-added score for Key Stage 4 was exceptionally high in 2006, enabling the school to easily exceed its overall target for GCSE passes and improve the pass rate of previous years. There was particularly notable performance in design technology, history, and the Vocational Business GCSE courses. GNVQ Information Communication Technology (ICT) was taken and passed by some two-thirds of all students in 2006, enabling them to gain a four-GCSE equivalent qualification. For the majority, this added to four or more higher-grade GCSEs in other subjects. The number of students passing the equivalent of five or more higher GCSE grades in Year 11

including English and mathematics was as expected considering students' starting points.

Overall, students with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve as well as others. Higher-ability students are fast-tracked to take early GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, and other subjects, and the results that they earn represent good achievement on their part.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students respond well to the school's expectations for behaviour. They go about their business sensibly, and were seen to be particularly good at observing safe practices during the inspection visit. The most recently published figures show that absence rates are in line with national averages. Current exclusion rates are lower than average, and the school is developing an internal inclusion unit to support students who might be at risk. Students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness is good overall.

Students are aware of the importance of maintaining good health. The school works hard to promote healthy lifestyles. There is a view amongst a very small minority of parents that the early start to the school day is not beneficial to students' well-being, but conversely it does provide more extensive opportunities for sporting and other activities in the afternoon which are appreciated by students. The school also ensures that healthy food is readily available during the two break times and students are also appreciative of this.

The school's prefect system enables a good proportion of Year 11 students to take a variety of responsibilities in the day-to-day running of the school, including break-time duties, mentoring, and public relations. A significant contribution is the students' own Bully Council, which allows for mediation between younger students with referral to an adult if necessary. There is a whole-school Council, but there is also a view that the school should give even greater consideration to the views of students.

The school's specialist status in Business and Enterprise does much to promote and develop skills for students' future economic well-being, and they acquire good IT skills and adequate literacy and numeracy skills overall.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage students effectively in their lessons, leading to good attitudes and behaviour and this helps effective learning to take place. Relationships in classrooms are positive. Students particularly appreciate

taking an active part in their learning; practical and vocational subjects provide good opportunities for this kind of work with challenging, imaginative tasks and ample opportunities to work in groups. Marking and assessment help to ensure that students know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve further. There are, however, a few lessons where teachers spend a disproportionate amount of time talking and demonstrating, leaving students with too little time to work independently. Marking in these lessons is less thorough and less helpful to students.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum meets the needs of most students and is well matched to their interests and aspirations with pathways including fast-track, vocational, and workplace options in Key Stage 4. Statutory requirements are met. The school has recently introduced formalised arrangements for assessing citizenship, and a half-GCSE is currently taken by all Year 11 students in religious education. Building on its current provision and the second specialism that will start in April 2007, the school is planning to offer a programme of specialist diplomas from September 2008.

Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are good including a range of sporting activities that are very popular with students, and musical and dramatic activities. The school holds the Artsmark and Sportsmark awards in recognition of this provision.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The school takes great care to manage students' health and safety, keeping comprehensive and up-to-date records of potential risks. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and regularly reviewed, and all current requirements are met. On-site security is well-attended to and all members of the school community wear named identification cards.

Students are well-guided to their option choices, and they are informed well about challenging targets for their future achievement. Learners who are most at risk are identified early and efficiently; the way that they are made welcome by both staff and students does much to integrate them quickly into school life, allowing them to achieve well and make a positive contribution to their community. As a senior member of staff commented, 'everyone has a right to feel comfortable here'. Students with learning difficulties are effectively supported (including in the sixth form), there is ongoing identification and support for Gifted and Talented students, and developing use of the 'Aim Higher' programme helps to raise students' aspirations for higher education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school is led by the enterprising headteacher, supported by a committed and diligent senior management team. They have built and delivered a comprehensive curriculum provision that is focussed on the needs of students, supported by much improved facilities and resources. Specialist School funds have been used particularly well in this respect. The school gives good value for money.

Governance is good. The long-standing Chair of Governors has a clear perspective of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and an efficient cycle of committee and full governing body meetings provides effective monitoring and challenging support to the school.

The school's self-evaluation text is open and shows an accurate understanding of issues for improvement. However, the school's lesson observation criteria do not focus enough on learning outcomes for students rather than just the teaching inputs. The school has indicated in its self-evaluation and school improvement plan that it needs to increase the rigour of its performance management processes, rightly recognising that this plays an important part in the school's overall effectiveness.



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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3
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	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
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	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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

8 March 2007

Dear Students,

The King Edmund School, Vaughan Close, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1TL

As you may remember, a colleague and I spent a day in your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting and talking with you, and we are pleased that many of you felt able to approach us to ask about our work and to talk about your school. It was also good to meet two small groups of you in the student panel meetings. All of your views were listened to carefully.

I am writing to you now to let you know the results of our inspection visit, and you'll be pleased to know that there's a lot for your school to be proud of. Overall, you do well in your Key Stage 4 examinations and this helps the school to easily exceed its overall targets for GCSE/GNVQ. You have an interesting choice of subjects to choose from and the facilities at the school are excellent. Importantly, your behaviour in and out of lessons during our visit showed that you know how your good attitudes play an important part in helping your teachers to teach and helping you to learn.

To help your school to improve even more, Mr Abel and I have agreed three key actions for your school community.

- Improve your results in English and mathematics to match the successes that you achieve in other subjects.
- Make sure that all of your teachers assess and mark your work in a way that will help you understand better how you can improve your work even more.
- Strengthen the roles and responsibilities of all your school managers in monitoring the quality of your lessons.

These are not just actions for your teachers - you and your parents have a very important part to play, too. You should continue supporting your school and showing good attitudes and behaviour. Good luck with your future studies and career plans, and keep working hard!

Yours faithfully

Mark Phillips

Her Majesty's Inspector