

# King Harold School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115331
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338566
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 September –1 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Seath 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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	575
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maryanne Fleming
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Morrish
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Broomstick Hall Road Waltham Abbey Essex
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 714800
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<b>Email address</b>	mcampbell@kingharold.essex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 34 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, a representative of the local authority, and representatives of the Kemnal Trust. They observed the school's work, looked at documentation, and received 108 completed questionnaires from parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which improvements seen in performance in 2009 are due to sustainable underlying improvements
- how self critical the school is, and how well this has led to improvement
- the identification of those at risk of underachieving at GCSE and the support and challenge they receive
- the extent to which teaching and learning have improved.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than most secondary schools and the number of students has decreased in recent years. The extent of deprivation in the school's catchment area is around the national average, as is the proportion of students known to eligible for free school meals. The number of students of minority ethnic heritage is below that expected nationally. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is around the national average. The school has Sportsmark and Healthy Schools status. It is host to the Sunshine and Wishing Well nurseries, neither of which is managed by the governing body. These are inspected separately.

The school has recently undergone a period of staffing turbulence. Following concerns about aspects of performance, the Kemnal Trust has worked with the school since September 2008. The school joined the trust in 2009. This organisation has been successful in driving up standards and the quality of provision in a number of schools, and aims to spread good practice through collaboration between institutions. An acting headteacher was in post at the time of inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

King Harold is a satisfactory school that is improving quickly. This improvement is due largely to the school's recent association with the Kemnal Trust and the expertise in school improvement that it has shared and provided. The school has firm and decisive leadership that has given a good direction for improvement. Because of this, most indicators of attainment and achievement improved markedly in 2009, continuing a trend which started the year before and which is predicted to continue into 2010. These improvements have been most marked in core subjects. The new governing body, together with the pace of change and improvement, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve. The school exceeded National Challenge floor targets (30% five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics) for the first time in 2009.

Improvements have been brought about by better quality of provision. Teaching and learning have improved and are now solidly satisfactory and occasionally good. The monitoring of students' progress and assessment have improved markedly, though they are still unevenly implemented in non-core subjects. Attendance and behaviour have improved, persistent absence markedly so. The curriculum provided is satisfactory. It currently lacks the variety of extra-curricular richness necessary to stimulate students' learning effectively. The good care that the school provides for students effectively enables them to make the transitions from primary school and onward to further education. It is effective in enabling students to achieve, but is not always matched by challenge in class, particularly for the most and least able. Aspects of literacy and numeracy are rarely taught outside of mathematics and English because the school lacks a coherent strategy to do this. As a consequence opportunities to reinforce learning in these areas are missed.

The school recognises that there is much work to do. Standards, though quickly improving, remain below national averages, especially for the most able. The school is clear about where improvement is needed. Action plans and targets to do this are challenging, but not always well implemented in non-core subjects. The school recognises the benefits to be gained from accurately identifying the best practice and sharing it better both within the school and between schools of the trust. Self-evaluation procedures are effective and improving.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment in 2010 so that 42% of students gain 5 or more GCSE passes at

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grades A\* to C including English and mathematics by:

- ensuring that all classes cater well for the least and most able
- ensuring that assessment is used effectively in all classes and subjects.
- With immediate effect, begin a programme of extra-curricular activities designed to stimulate interest and enhance learning across and outside of the curriculum.
- Within 12 months, raise the proportion of good or better lessons to 70% by:
  - ensuring that the lesson observation system identifies best practice
  - sharing this within the school, and between schools in the trust
  - greater use of peer observation of lessons which demonstrate successful learning.
- Within six months, devise and implement a cross-school literacy and numeracy policy so that:
  - teachers of all subjects are aware of the literacy and numeracy standards their students should be attaining
  - all classes and all subjects use literacy, communications and number to consolidate students' learning and build confidence in core subjects.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

When students enter the school in Year 7 their prior attainment is generally below average. Until recently, students made poor progress during their time at the school and attained low standards. However, changes made by the Kemnal Trust have led to rapid and sustainable improvements in standards because the quality of provision and the monitoring of students' progress have improved. For example, the proportion of students attaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics rose by 10% to 36% in 2009, higher than national baseline targets. Indications from the school's monitoring and tracking are that these improvements will continue.

Despite clear and marked improvements, attainment overall is still below national averages. The school has rightly concentrated on driving up achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. As a consequence, considerable variations remain in the results of other GCSE subjects. The proportion of students attaining the highest grades A\* and A remains well below national averages.

In class, students demonstrate learning that is largely satisfactory and sometimes good. Inspectors observed students making satisfactory progress in most classes. Students are usually compliant and purposeful, especially in the earlier years. Attendance has improved markedly from unacceptably low levels two years ago. It is now around the national average with an improving trend. The large majority of parents, carers and students judge that the school deals effectively with poor behaviour. Inspectors observed mostly calm behaviour in corridors and around the school, with the school's own measures indicating marked recent improvements. However, in class students

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rarely help each other learn and many do not demonstrate the skills of independent learning. For this reason behaviour is satisfactory rather than good. A small minority of parents remain concerned about behaviour.

Girls achieved better GCSE results than boys in both 2008 and 2009. However, the school's new monitoring systems are beginning to close this gap because staff can now accurately judge progress. This improvement is most marked in the lower school. Students who find learning difficult achieve in line with their peers, but in reading they do better because of the good support they receive. Students on vocational courses other than GCSEs achieve well and many continue into further education. Students say that they enjoy their time at school and that they feel safe. Their parents agreed, and so did inspectors. The extent of students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Inspectors observed largely satisfactory teaching and learning, which agrees with the school's own evaluation. The school's own data indicate significant improvement in

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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classroom practice over the last 18 months, and inspectors agreed. The use of assessment has improved markedly, but remains uneven between subjects. It is best in the core subjects and the school recognises the need to extend this.

Generally, students have a good idea of their targets and how to attain them. The progress that students make is mostly satisfactory, but better where the structure and pace of the class allow learning to improve, or where the students are stimulated to ask searching questions. In the weaker lessons, learning proceeds at too slow a pace because the teacher is directing the lesson too much. Teachers rarely cater for all abilities well, as the level of challenge is too low; and opportunities to focus on literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics are often missed. The quality of marking and the setting of homework are too variable.

The school offers a satisfactory and balanced curriculum. The provision of information and communication technology has improved and the school meets all statutory requirements. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, although participation in sports could be improved much further. Students have limited opportunities to engage in more varied extra-curricular activities such as visits and cultural activities. This is improving because of the links with other trust schools. The school recognises the need to extend this so that students are more stimulated to learn and enquire.

Students receive good care, guidance and support that are well organised and delivered. Those at risk of underachieving are identified well. Teaching assistants work well in class and are appreciated by students although their activities are not always planned effectively. The school can demonstrate that some aspects of the care it provides enable students to attain higher standards than their peers. The school works closely with many families to provide care, especially for those students with special educational needs or other difficulties. The level of care has contributed to improved behaviour and better attitudes to learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school is improving quickly because leaders and managers are rapidly ensuring that systems for driving up standards are well established and working efficiently. Behaviour and attendance have both improved so that learning is more effective. They are supported by better monitoring of pupils' progress and target setting. The school has a

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good view of its own strengths and weaknesses, and self-evaluations are realistic and accurate. Targets are challenging, and are usually reflected in staff's performance management. Improvements observed by inspectors were verified by responses from parents, pupils and staff. The new management team is embedding ambition and driving improvement well.

The involvement of the Kemnal Trust has been crucial to these improvements and partnership working is good. Expertise gained in other improving schools has been brought to bear quickly, and there is a growing exchange of staff and systems. The school recognises, however, that this identification and sharing of best practice could usefully be extended much further between institutions and between subject areas. The school's understanding of its own teaching and learning is accurate, although the identification of precise areas for improvement is not always done well at subject level. The school is improving the ways that it monitors its own performance but at present these lack the precision to ensure, for example, that homework or marking is consistent between subjects or between classes.

The school has a new governing body that brings enthusiasm and a range of skills to the role. They recognise that they have training needs, for example in the analysis of school performance data, so that they can challenge the school more effectively. Because of this they judge themselves satisfactory rather than good. This recognition, together with clear improvements in standards, teaching and learning, and sustainable management systems, demonstrate that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

The school meets requirements for safeguarding well. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory but is improving as the school becomes better at monitoring the attainment of various groups and works to address gender differences in achievement. It is compliant with the requirements of the Race Relations Act. The small number of racist incidents are dealt with appropriately. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory; there is not yet clear evidence that plans to engage communities beyond the school are having a sustained effect.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Inspectors broadly agreed with the majority views of the parents, which were largely positive.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at King Harold school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 575 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	22	71	66	7	6	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	17	16	68	63	16	15	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	14	62	57	14	13	6	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	17	61	56	10	9	6	6
The teaching is good at this school	14	13	62	57	20	19	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	11	63	58	22	20	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	6	67	62	22	20	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	9	58	54	13	12	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	13	66	61	13	12	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	16	53	49	17	16	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	6	61	56	13	12	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	13	12	61	56	20	19	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	31	20	31	15	23	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 October 2009

Dear students,

Inspection of King Harold School, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 1LF

As you will know, I visited your school earlier this week with four other inspectors. We visited many of your classes, met many of you, looked at your work, and were pleased to receive many completed questionnaires. Throughout this you were polite and helpful - thank you.

Your school has been through unsettling times recently, but is now improving quickly. Results are getting much better and we judged that your learning is also improving. You have improved your attendance dramatically - well done to all. Behaviour has also improved.

Your school is about to enter a period of rapid improvement. To help this process we have given the head and his colleagues some challenging targets to meet. These include improving teaching and learning, and making sure that you have more extra-curricular trips and activities to interest you and fire you up to find out more. There will also be better use of assessment to make sure that you are all clear about the progress you are making, and better attention given to literacy and numeracy in all lessons. Above all, we have agreed that GCSE pass rates should increase significantly next year.

This will take time, and it is crucial that you help in the process. Improvements seen so far have been largely due to you and your parents, and you must keep this up so that you will succeed and go on to the next stage of your education. Remember, it is your school and your education.

One of the things you told us is that the amount of bullying is low. You can help to keep it this way by talking to a teacher if you are affected. You also told us that you receive good care and support and that you feel safe, and we agreed.

Thank you once again, and I wish you all success

Yours faithfully

Ian Seath

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

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