

The Ebbsfleet Academy

Southfleet Road, Swanscombe, Kent DA10 0BZ

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal provides determined leadership. Along with trustees, governors and senior leaders, she articulates a clear vision of her aspiration for all pupils. As a result, there have been impressive improvements in all aspects of the school since opening.
- Strong leadership has led to higher academic standards, better behaviour and increased attendance. However, further improvements, particularly with regard to persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils, are required.
- Leaders hold teaching staff to account for pupils' progress and provide effective training that supports improvements in teaching. Teaching has improved.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and use this information to plan effective lessons. However, teachers do not always provide challenge for the most able pupils to make further progress.
- Progress has increased for different groups in the school and standards of achievement have risen considerably over time. Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than in the past.
- Most pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, and across the curriculum in subjects such as science and art. Many make better progress, but pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make slower progress, especially in mathematics.
- Governors and trustees are effective. They challenge the work of leaders well and make sure that pupils' achievement is improving.
- The curriculum is well organised and enables pupils to succeed. Leaders ensure that pupils are able to move on to employment or appropriate further courses.
- Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils take pride in their appearance and are proud to be members of the school community. Attendance has increased.
- There is mutual respect between pupils and staff, and a shared set of high behavioural expectations. These have enabled progress to improve for all pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially in mathematics.
- Continue to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence further, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Ensure that, across the curriculum, teachers challenge the most able to secure even better progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal leads The Ebbsfleet Academy with passion and energy. She is committed to improving outcomes for all pupils. Her leadership, through insistence upon a 'no excuses' culture, has led to significant improvements across the school's work. She and other senior leaders have a shared sense of responsibility to continually improve the school and this is inspiring staff and pupils alike. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated consistently and, although it is not yet outstanding, it has improved significantly over time.
- The work of the school to improve the life chances of pupils through increasing their aspirations is impressive. The school's motto of 'Aspire, Excel' is embraced by the teaching staff and the pupils. The school is well supported in this core aim by the Brook Learning Trust. Their stated aim to 'ensure outstanding achievement and progress, raise aspirations and maximise potential' is aligned closely to the work of school leaders. Parents feel strongly that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders ensure that staff share their vision that every pupil can achieve. Leaders and other staff work hard to translate these aims into practical actions. This ensures that pupils' personal development and welfare are at the centre of the school's work.
- Partnerships with other schools in the Brook Learning Trust are effective. There is a common approach to assessment, developed by staff from all schools. The process used to create the framework involved extensive subject moderation, and senior leaders' oversight. This means that there are secure assessment systems across key stages and between the schools. As a result, parents are kept well informed of the progress pupils are making.
- School leaders and teachers improve teaching and learning through effective regular meetings over pupils' academic performance. Teachers' awareness of pupils' progress, and the next steps needed to improve it, is good as a result. Leaders are aware that the most able pupils could be given greater challenge to make even faster progress.
- Leaders are effective at making sure that staff training is closely linked to improving teaching. They also make sure that teachers' targets match the aims of the school improvement plan. This means that all staff are improving teaching together. The staff surveys show that the leadership of the school is valued highly. Staff are proud to be members of the school community.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. It has undergone a restructure to give daily time to English and mathematics, and more time to humanities, science and languages. This is improving outcomes in these subject areas. Added to this, there is a wide-ranging set of enrichment activities for pupils, which complement lessons well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Enrichment activities, assembly work and global studies combine well to enhance this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and embrace different cultures.
- Leaders ensure that pupils receive relevant and timely careers information. Pupils in key stage 4 receive advice on a range of courses and apprenticeships that they can move on to. There are no pupils that leave without entering education or training, and increasing proportions of pupils go on to study at a higher level.
- Leaders ensure that the Year 7 catch-up funding is used to good effect to raise

standards for pupils that arrive with lower than average attainment in English and mathematics. Pupils that receive this extra help make strong progress.

- Senior leaders ensure that the use of pupil premium funding is effective and reviewed annually. This funding is used in a variety of ways, including to raise pupils' attendance and attainment, which are both rising over time as a result. However, there is still room for improvement in attendance for a minority of pupils.
- Leadership for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving. There are a number of effective approaches to supporting these pupils in place, although some are relatively new. These include regular briefings and breakfast meetings for staff regarding particular pupils. These pupils receive extra help when they need it, especially for reading and writing. Support to improve their mathematics skills is more limited.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong. There are clear systems of accountability that have made sure that the local governing body and the multi-academy trust are successful in both challenging and supporting leaders to oversee significant improvements.
- The Brook Learning Trust and the local governing body have successfully challenged school leaders to create a school for the local community that has the aspirational aims of the trust at its heart. Regular meetings and effective training enable governors to ensure that the raising of academic standards stays at the centre of their work. As a result, they have a clear understanding of the performance of pupils in the school.
- Governors and trustees are aware of the current priorities for school improvement. However, governors need to ensure that all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, including the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Procedures in school to oversee pupils' safety are strong. Systems are in place to ensure that all relevant employment checks are made for new staff. Regular high-quality training is provided for staff on safeguarding matters and there are well-maintained records. Leaders have made pupils' safety a central staff responsibility in that governors are trained well in safer recruitment practices and staff are kept aware of any pupils that may be at risk of exposure to extremism. Staff are vigilant and apply the school's policies consistently. Pupils are kept safe as a result.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers share the commitment of the principal and senior leaders to ensure that all pupils achieve their best. They use their strong subject knowledge well to plan interesting lessons that pupils enjoy. Pupils generally work enthusiastically in lessons as a result.
- Leaders and teachers set ambitious and aspirational targets for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to believe that they can reach high standards and are given the right support to do so. Teachers and school leaders track pupils' progress closely and teachers use the information well in planning their lessons.
- Teachers collaborate effectively across different subjects. They understand the school's

priorities for improvement. Teachers use strategies that have raised standards in English and mathematics across the wider curriculum, for example in technology, history and geography. This is leading to improvements in pupils' progress.

- Where pupils' learning is at its strongest, teachers ensure that tasks are at the right level for pupils. When this is not the case there are some instances of low-level off-task behaviour. Although these instances are rare, they do slow progress when they occur. Teachers do not always plan additional challenge for the most able pupils and when this is the case they make less progress than they could
- Teachers' thoughtful questioning extends pupils' thinking. In most lessons, there are regular checks on pupils' understanding. In some lessons, where questioning is less effective, pupils make slower progress.
- Teaching in English is strong and supports pupils' learning well through carefully structured activities. For example, in key stage 4 pupils participate in discussions to deepen understanding of examination techniques. Pupils make good progress.
- Teaching in mathematics is more variable. In key stage 3, there is generally a good level of challenge, although this is not always the case for the most able. In key stage 4, pupils are not always able to explain their thinking clearly enough around mathematical concepts and progress is slower as a result. Teaching for pupils in key stage 4 is beginning to successfully address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving across the curriculum. In English, teachers' planning means that there is generally good support and progress. In mathematics, the approach to the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is leading to good progress at key stage 3, particularly for pupils in Year 8 that are following the revised curriculum. However, in key stage 4 there has been limited extra help for these pupils in the past and progress has been slower as a result.
- Teachers use a common approach when giving feedback to pupils. Pupils are given time to improve their work. Pupils that make the necessary improvements to their work make good progress, but a few inconsistencies remain, especially in languages, mathematics and humanities.
- Pupils' literacy across the curriculum is improving. Teachers' feedback in books in a wide range of subjects is increasing the quality of pupils' spelling and grammar, and pupils' enjoyment of reading is increasing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are kept safe. The vast majority of pupils feel well looked after. Parents state that their children feel safe and happy at school.
- Staff share the commitment of senior leaders that pupils' welfare is underpinned by good standards of behaviour and academic achievement. Teachers are good role models and apply the school's rules consistently. Pupils respect adults, and those in positions of responsibility. The prefect system is valued by pupils and one pupil explained to an inspector how proud he was to apply for the role.
- Most pupils feel that their experience of school has improved and it is an inclusive

community. The house system underpins pupils' participation in school life through inter-house competitions. In addition, the school operates a clear reward system to recognise pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. This links to the weekly 'EA news' bulletin, house assemblies and rewards events. The vast majority of pupils feel valued, although a minority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities report that they feel that their needs are not fully understood.

- The teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values is well developed. Pupils learn valuable lessons regarding tolerance for others. Pupils engage in charity work through the house system. They also learn about different religions, cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles through global education. This is reflected in the way that pupils socialise together well during breaktime.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe, including online. In addition, they learn about current affairs in tutor time and about such issues as extremism, online abuse and child sexual exploitation. This is preparing them well for life beyond school.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provider that meets their specific needs. There is a good level of communication with the provider regarding attendance and welfare as well as close monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Pupils receive useful careers information and guidance. They are confident and well prepared for the next stage in their education or training. Increasing proportions of pupils are moving on to level 3 qualifications compared with the past and there are links with universities and visiting speakers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct around the school is orderly and the atmosphere is pleasant. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff, visitors and each other. They understand the high expectations of behaviour in the school. They take pride in the uniform and in being a member of the school community. Parents state that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils enjoy a calm and structured start to the day. Pupils line up for school, and enter assembly in an orderly manner, then take their seats. This means that pupils are well prepared to listen.
- Leaders and teachers take a strong stance on behaviour. As a result of this, pupils' behaviour is improving. Detentions are used as a deterrent to rule-breaking. The proportion of pupils receiving detentions is decreasing.
- Attendance is just below average, but improving, and persistent absence is high but decreasing, including for disadvantaged pupils. There is still room for improvement, and leaders have well-judged systems in place that are having the right impact over time.
- Permanent exclusions are rare and only used in extreme circumstances. Fixed-term exclusions are reducing. School policy is such that there is an aspiration that no disadvantaged pupils are excluded.
- Pupils understand what it means to be a successful learner. They arrive on time for lessons. They are well prepared in terms of equipment and engage in their lessons effectively.
- In a minority of lessons there are some instances of low-level off-task behaviour. This is often due to the challenge of the work not meeting all pupils' needs, including the most able. Teachers are quick to correct any incidents of poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment and progress have improved since the school opened. In 2015 pupils made good progress and the proportion achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was in line with national averages. Pupils' progress in 2015 was in line with national averages, with some pupils making better than average progress. In 2016 good progress for pupils was sustained. Current Year 11 pupils are on track to achieve improved standards this year, including in humanities.
- Outcomes in humanities, science and languages are improving. Leaders have made changes to the amount of time pupils spend in these subject areas, as well using methods that have raised achievement elsewhere in the curriculum. For example, teachers are now using proven methods from English and mathematics to prepare pupils for examinations in key stage 4. Standards in the English baccalaureate subjects are rising as a result.
- Leaders' use of pupil premium funding is well judged and improving progress for disadvantaged pupils. Support for pupils who arrive from primary schools needing to catch up is leading to significantly improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Progress for disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum is improving over time. The identification of these pupils, and the support given to them, means that they are making better progress than in the past, and differences with other pupils nationally are diminishing. The most able disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than in the past, particularly in English and mathematics, but also across other subjects in the curriculum.
- Pupils' progress in English is good across different year groups and key stages. Teachers in English plan effectively. Progress is improving.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is improving year on year. The improvements are most evident in key stage 3 owing to the revised curriculum, although the most able are making comparatively slow progress. In key stage 4, increases in pupils' progress have been slower, although there are indications that this is beginning to accelerate.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are improving, and are good in the majority of subjects. This is because of better support and planning. The improvements are most evident in key stage 3 but more time is needed to see the full impact of recent initiatives. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in English, but less in mathematics.
- Progress for the most able pupils is good. In key stage 4, progress in English is rapid and there is a high level of challenge in mathematics. In key stage 3, however, most-able pupils are not challenged as much as they could be and pupils' progress in English, mathematics and in other subjects, such as history and geography, is limited as a result.
- Pupils enjoy reading. All pupils have books and reading is promoted through initiatives such as 'drop everything and read'. Pupils participate in 'popcorn reading' where all members of a class are required to read aloud. Pupils discuss their reading regularly. However, the new and fledgling library is not used to full effect currently.
- Progress for the small minority of pupils that attend alternative provision is improving broadly in line with other pupils in the school. Pre-admission meetings ensure that start points are understood and teachers plan effectively. There are regular reviews of pupils' progress.

School details

Unique reference number	137581
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10019836

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	579
Appropriate authority	The Brook Learning Trust
Chair	Ian Daker
Principal	Alison Colwell
Telephone number	01322 623100
Website	www.theebbsfleetacademy.kent.sch.uk
Email address	admin@theebbsfleetacademy.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Ebbsfleet Academy is a smaller than average-sized school for pupils from 11 to 16 and is a member of the Brook Learning Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion with a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- A small number of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 attend the North West Kent Alternative Provision Service to better meet their needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

- The school does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies should publish about annual reporting on the effectiveness of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about annual reporting on the effectiveness of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the principal, representatives of the Brook Learning Trust, the local governing body, senior leaders, teachers, support staff and several groups of pupils. An inspector spoke to a representative of the alternative provider.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 22 lessons in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment: seven of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Short sections of 17 other lessons were observed. In addition, inspectors also attended tutor periods, two assemblies and observed pupils' conduct around the site at breaktimes.
- A range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, records of meetings of the local governing body, strategic planning documents, safety, school self-evaluation documents, pupils' achievements, behaviour and attendance information, information regarding use of the pupil premium funding and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 189 responses by pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaire, 113 responses by parents on Parent View and 69 responses to staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Mark Goode, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Old	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Haynes	Her Majesty's Inspector

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