

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Ebbsfleet Academy

Southfleet Road, Swanscombe, Kent DA10 0BZ

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Gurjit Kaur Shergill. This school is part of Leigh 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, Simon Beamish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Frank Green.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone is valued at Ebbsfleet Academy. Pupils attend happily, safely and with pride. The school wants pupils to 'believe, achieve, succeed'. It creates a culture of aspiration and success, with a broad and interesting curriculum that opens pupils' eyes to the world around them.

Many pupils join at different points of the school year. Whenever they join, each new pupil gets the help they need to settle in swiftly. New pupils quickly learn the school's clear behaviour expectations that help everyone to learn. The school is divided into two smaller colleges. This helps pupils to feel known and cared for. Many staff and pupils talked about how the school feels like a family.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, the achievement of pupils, including those in the sixth form, has improved over time. Given their starting points, pupils now achieve well, as indicated in provisional published outcomes in 2024.

Pupils benefit from an extensive programme of life-skills and careers education. They learn about how to maintain mental and physical health. They also receive extensive assistance with their next steps. The support that students in the sixth form receive enables them to progress to a range of increasingly ambitious destinations.

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

The school has created an engaging and ambitious curriculum that meets the requirements of what is expected nationally. The number of pupils taking English Baccalaureate subjects has increased significantly. The International Baccalaureate philosophy is at the heart of the curriculum. It successfully encourages pupils to be open minded, to take risks and demonstrate their ability to think, reflect and communicate.

The school has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to learn and how that learning can be checked. Pupils are able to talk about what they learn with confidence. For example, in science, pupils in Year 10 could explain their learning about nanoparticles and moles, while pupils in Year 8 could explain the difference between aerobic and anaerobic respiration. In computing, students in Year 12 were able to demonstrate how they used coding to create their own website.

Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects they teach. They present subject matter clearly and check pupils' understanding systematically. They identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback to pupils. Many students in the sixth form reported how their teachers' feedback helps them to make improvements in their work. As part of the school's digital strategy, all pupils have their own laptop. This makes resources more accessible and supports pupils' learning both in class and at home.

Systems are in place to identify pupils with additional needs. This includes pupils with SEND and those who may be at the earliest stages of learning English. Leaders ensure that appropriate information and strategies are shared with staff. As a result, pupils with SEND are typically well supported to build up their knowledge over time. Systems are in place to identify those who may need more help with their reading. These pupils receive additional support, and this ensures that most read with increasing accuracy, fluency and confidence. The gap between those who are disadvantaged and those who are not is closing and smaller than the gap nationally.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons and around the site. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. As a result of the clear routines and procedures, lessons proceed without disruption. Older pupils take on the role of prefects and help to manage behaviour at break and lunchtimes. The attendance of pupils was negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the school has been relentless in addressing any absences. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved significantly in recent years.

The school encourages pupils to become responsible, respectful and active citizens. Pupils can take up a wide range of positions of leadership and responsibility. They can become sports captains, subject ambassadors, reading buddies or peer mentors. Pupils in Year 9 undertake a community project. Some students join the school's successful archery team. Others join clubs in creativity, code-breaking and e-sports.

School and trust leaders work together with the highly knowledgeable governors and trustees to review the school's effectiveness. As a result, they have an accurate

understanding of what is working well and have identified appropriate priorities for further development. Staff, including those at the start of their careers, enjoy working at the school and know that their voices are heard. They appreciate their opportunities for professional development. Staff are positive about the efforts made by leaders to manage workload and well-being effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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	137581
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341695
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	842
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	82
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
CEO of the trust	Simon Beamish
Principal	Gurjit Kaur Shergill
Website	www.ebbsfleetacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 October 2019

Information about this school

- The school is part of Leigh Academies Trust.
- The academy is an International Baccalaureate World School which is registered for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme and the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the principal, members of the school senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, including a member of the trust board and the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with the chief executive officer and trust academies director.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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 inspectors considered the views of parents shared through the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through the online pupil and staff surveys, as well as through discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Christian Hicks, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Parkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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