

King's Academy Ringmer

Lewes Road, Ringmer, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 5RB

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
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

- Leaders', governors' and trustees' actions have led to rapid improvements in many aspects of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the changes in the last two years.
- Leaders have significantly improved the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils' progress has improved substantially and is in line with other pupils nationally.
- GCSE results in 2018 were just above those of other schools nationally. Current pupils continue to make strong progress.
- Leaders have set clear expectations for behaviour. Pupils behave well and the school is a calm and orderly environment for learning.
- Governors and trustees know the school well and hold leaders to account very thoroughly about pupils' progress.
- Trustees have been very supportive. They strengthened the teaching team so that pupils are taught by specialist teachers.
- Typically, teachers' insightful questioning and feedback both encourages and challenges pupils. On occasions, feedback is not precise enough to help pupils learn.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. The curriculum is carefully planned to enable all pupils to make effective progress.
- Progress has improved in many subjects but is not consistently strong in all, particularly physical education (PE) and Spanish.
- Pupils are confident learners. They are provided with many opportunities to take on positions of responsibility.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well. They make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are carefully guided in their learning. They make strong progress from their starting points.
- The whole-school approach to literacy is supporting pupils to develop a wider vocabulary. Pupils joining the school with below-average levels of literacy improve their reading ages well.
- Leaders have improved pupils' attendance. It is now in line with the national average. However, disadvantaged pupils who do not attend school regularly are not making enough progress.
- Pupils feel safe and they are supported well by adults in the school. Pupils understand the risks of the modern world.
- Pupils are guided well in choosing appropriate courses for the next stage of their education. All school leavers continue in education, employment or training.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Governors and leaders to raise the progress and attainment of all pupils so they do at least as well as other pupils nationally in PE and Spanish at GCSE.
- Ensure that the school's policy on feedback is more consistently applied so that all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Leaders and governors need to ensure that those disadvantaged pupils who frequently miss school attend school regularly so that they can catch up with other pupils nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders, governors and trustees have created a very strong and clear vision for the school. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and they have responded decisively to make the necessary improvements. Now, teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils' outcomes have improved rapidly since the school became an academy.
- Leaders' actions have led to considerable improvements in all aspects of the school. Pupils' progress has improved substantially and it is now in line with other pupils nationally. Parents and pupils comment on the significant improvements in the school, in particular the quality of teaching and the behaviour of pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the changes that have been made in the last two years. Parents typically said, 'Tremendous improvement in teaching and management over the last couple of years' and 'King's Academy has improved dramatically under the principal's leadership'.
- Leaders have implemented clear systems and expectations in relation to pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils' behaviour has improved significantly in the last two years, leading to a reduction in fixed-term exclusions. The school provides a calm and orderly environment for learning. Furthermore, leaders' actions have led to major improvements in the attendance of pupils so that it is now in line with other schools nationally.
- Leaders, supported well by trustees, have ensured that effective teaching appointments have been made to strengthen the staff team. As a result, pupils are now taught by knowledgeable and specialist staff. Subject leaders are particularly strong in the core subjects. Leaders recognise and address weaknesses in subjects. Leaders have a strong focus on supporting weaker departments to improve the quality of teaching and learning so pupils make progress.
- The school is inclusive and supports pupils with SEND exceptionally well. Pupils with SEND are ably led by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Typically, well-trained learning support assistants guide pupils very effectively so that they are able to understand and improve their work. Consequently, pupils with SEND make strong progress. Strong and effective relationships are developed with parents so they are involved in planning their children's special needs provision. Pupils who join the school with below-average literacy levels are supported well by the use of Year 7 catch-up funding to improve their levels of literacy and numeracy.
- Staff value the support and training they receive from the trust and through links with local schools in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Staff responding to Ofsted's online survey were extremely positive, highlighting the support from the trust, and the support from senior leaders in managing workload. Leaders' wider considerations for staff well-being are highly valued by teachers and a positive and supportive culture permeates across the school. Staff appreciate being consulted and they feel part of a team.
- Pupils are taught aspects of fundamental British values and democracy. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain. The school has achieved the 'democracy gold

award' that reflects leaders' strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand and embrace democratic values. Pupils are made aware of environmental issues and sustainability as exemplified by the school achieving the eco-schools award. Leaders have provided a comprehensive and well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. It is delivered through lessons and tutor activities to ensure that pupils' personal needs are met well.

- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced and so that more pupils are now taking the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects. The number of pupils taking modern foreign languages has increased significantly, which is supporting the school's vision to develop an international dimension to the school. Strong links exist with overseas schools, and pupils are able to take a scholarship at one of the King's Group schools in Madrid.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is carefully designed to meet the needs of pupils, to develop knowledge, skills and understanding sequentially. For example, the key stage 3 English curriculum prepares pupils well for their GCSEs by developing their knowledge and understanding of a range of genre and texts. Pupils value the opportunity to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music, drama and sports. Opportunities for older pupils to develop leadership skills are impressive. For example, the senior-student committee has responsibility for developing aspects of the school, such as planning activities to support the transition of Year 6 pupils visiting the school, and devising charity fundraising activities.
- Leaders make excellent use of the additional funding available to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have a coherent plan to use pupil premium funding effectively. Funding is used skilfully to meet the needs of individual disadvantaged pupils as well as providing generic support for groups of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the progress of these pupils is similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- Trustees monitor the school's performance closely to ensure that the progress of pupils is sustained and continues to improve rapidly. Subject leaders appreciate the support from the trust with professional development to improve quality assurance processes, and in raising standards.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear vision for the future of the school and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They are very ambitious for the school. Governors and trustees have managed the school's finances well. Their actions and their support of leaders have led to an increase in the number of pupils applying to the school from the local community for September 2019.
- Governors understand their responsibilities to ensure that pupils are safe. Governors have undertaken safeguarding training, and the chair of governors is trained in safer recruitment. Trustees rigorously monitor the school's key performance measures to ensure that the quality of provision is constantly improving. They have been proactive in ensuring that the school has the right staff in place.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders ensure that staff are appropriately trained and that they know how to support pupils skilfully. For example, staff have been trained recently on how to support pupils with mental health issues. Leaders make appropriate referrals to outside agencies when the need arises. Governors support leaders well in linking with the local community to address any local concerns.
- Pupils feel very safe and they know that there is an adult they can talk to should they have any worries. Pupils are made aware of the risks and dangers presented in wider society, for example, the concerns over drug dealing crossing 'county lines'. They know how to keep themselves safe when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Typically, the well-designed curriculum ensures that teachers plan learning well so that pupils build on previous knowledge and understanding to improve their work. For example, the most able pupils are effectively challenged in a range of subjects through more difficult tasks that help to deepen their learning.
- The strong relationships between staff and pupils help to encourage a conducive and safe learning environment. For example, in mathematics pupils felt confident to become engaged in an interesting class discussion about congruent shapes.
- Literacy is a school priority, and pupils are supported well in understanding new vocabulary. For example, in history and religious education pupils clarified their understanding of key words very well to remove misconceptions. In addition, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes, read aloud well, and are confident to express their ideas.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils helps them to understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Consequently, pupils are able to improve their work and are prepared well for their GCSEs. For example, in English, science and history, teachers' precise feedback, in accordance with the school's policy, helps pupils to improve their work over time.
- Variations remain in the quality of teaching both within and across departments. As a result, occasionally, the feedback provided, and notes that pupils have to learn from, do not help them well enough to improve their learning.
- Teachers' skilfully targeted questioning of pupils of differing abilities helps to encourage and challenge them in their learning. In addition, teachers' questioning helps to clarify pupils' misconceptions. Typically, in mathematics and science, pupils are confident learners and they are able to ask reflective questions that lead to interesting mathematical and scientific discussions.
- In the main, teachers have strong subject knowledge and use resources effectively to support pupils. Pupils with SEND are supported well in the classroom. For example, they are provided with additional resources and support from learning support assistants that help them to improve their learning and make progress in line with other pupils.

- The quality of teaching is continuing to improve in the majority of subjects. For example, in French, pupils are enthusiastic and attentive. They take pride in their work, and the most able are challenged over time through in-depth extended writing tasks. Weaknesses do remain in a minority of subjects at GCSE, for example in PE and Spanish.
- Pupils are provided with challenging targets to ensure that their aspirations are high. For example, in science, lessons are planned well to engage pupils and ensure that they are challenged to achieve the highest grades. This was seen in Year 10 where pupils were challenged through working on electrolysis and were confident to explain their ideas.
- Communication with parents has improved over time so that parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. Homework is set regularly, although a minority of parents commented that an appropriate amount was not set.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Overwhelmingly, pupils are very attentive in lessons and they take great pride in their work. They respond well to teachers' questions, and the vast majority of pupils are very enthusiastic about their work. Pupils were courteous and respectful to inspectors, to their teachers, and to each other during the inspection, both in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- A very clear and highly comprehensive PSHE programme across all year groups is supported well by the assembly and tutor programmes that pupils enthusiastically engage in. Pupils are made aware of the importance of making healthy life choices. For example, pupils make healthy eating choices supported by food technology lessons and they follow advice on healthy relationships from PSHE lessons.
- Pupils are provided with numerous opportunities to take on responsibilities within the school. For example, older pupils support younger pupils through peer mentoring. Pupils are involved in a proactive school council that is highly valued by pupils. Pupils respond very well to the praise they receive, as reflected in the high number of positive achievement points awarded.
- The senior-student committee has responsibility for developing aspects of the school. For example, planning activities to support the transition of Year 6 pupils visiting the school, devising charity fund-raising activities and, importantly, planning the school prom. These pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and they are developing a broader range of skills in planning, marketing, teamwork and liaising with the wider community.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, and the majority of pupils feel that bullying issues are dealt with very effectively. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and take on responsibilities. They are taught about respecting each other and this is very evident when observing pupils around the school. Pupils appreciate the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) club that is available.

- A small number of pupils with mental health issues attend a range of home-based alternative provision with East Sussex local authority. They are supported well, and weekly contact is maintained with school leaders. Year 11 have clear pathways to enable them to progress to the next stage of education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The principal, ably supported by senior leaders, has set high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well around the school and conduct themselves well, moving in an orderly and business-like manner. On the rare occasions when misbehaviour does occur, pupils are dealt with calmly and effectively. At lunchtime pupils behave sensibly and cooperate well together. Typically, the site is clear of litter and graffiti, exemplifying how well pupils respect their school environment. Older pupils referred to the significant improvements in behaviour in the last two years and said that there is now a consistent approach by staff.
- Leaders have developed effective systems to support the behaviour of pupils. As a result, the number of pupils who receive fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly and is now in line with the national average. Permanent exclusions are below the national average.
- Leaders' actions have been highly effective in improving the previously low levels of attendance. Overall attendance for current pupils, including those with SEND, and disadvantaged pupils, is in line with the national average. Leaders have implemented a range of successful strategies to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders' actions have not been successful in helping disadvantaged pupils who are frequently absent. Their attendance remains well below that of other pupils nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders, supported by trustees, have acted quickly to improve pupils' progress from historically weak outcomes. Consequently, pupils' progress at GCSE in 2018 was just above the national average overall, including for mathematics, science and humanities subjects.
- Current Year 11 pupils are continuing to make strong progress. Leaders' predictions for these pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, indicate continued improvement. Teachers were very accurate in their predictions of what pupils were going to achieve last year.
- Disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils in their GCSEs in 2018. However, current disadvantaged pupils' standard of work and attainment are similar to other pupils in school. In addition, pupils with SEND are making strong progress in line with that of other pupils.
- Standards of pupils' work have improved substantially in English due to the appointment of a specialist team of English teachers. Leaders' strong drive to improve literacy across the curriculum is supporting pupils well in the vast majority of subjects. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of key vocabulary is checked frequently by teachers, resulting in improved standards of literacy across the school. Pupils in Year 7

who are receiving catch-up funding have improved their reading ages though the effective support provided through the literacy intervention programme.

- Leaders are prioritising pupils' progress in PE and Spanish at GCSE as it remains below that of other subjects. In key stage 3, modern foreign language teaching is improving, both in French and Spanish.
- The most able pupils are given suitable work to challenge them so that they are able to attempt more difficult tasks. For example, in science, pupils wrestle with harder concepts that deepen their understanding. As a result, the most able are making strong progress in all year groups.
- Careers education is strong. Pupils receive effective careers advice and guidance. Consequently, all pupils last year entered further education, employment or training. The school has continued to track pupils after they have finished their GCSEs to ensure that they are enrolled on appropriate courses. Pupils have the opportunity to undertake work experience that has raised their aspirations. University students visit the school to work with Year 9 pupils so that they understand what it is like to attend university, which is helping to raise pupils' aspiration further.

School details

Unique reference number	144505
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10090957

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Denise Kong
Principal	Matthew Hillier
Telephone number	01273 812 220
Website	www.kgaringmer.uk
Email address	ringmer.reception@kingsacademies.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils (91.2%) are of White British heritage, with a proportion of minority ethnic groups broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils (18.7%) who with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (29.3%) is just above the national average (28%).
- Currently, a small number of pupils attend home-based alternative provision provided by East Sussex local authority.
- The school is part of the King's Group Academies.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 40 lessons, including a number of short visits to tutor groups. The majority of lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders. During visits to classes, inspectors looked at pupils' work in books.
- Inspectors examined a selection of pupils' work from key stages 3 and 4.
- Meetings were held with the deputy principal and staff, including newly qualified teachers and academic senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of 39 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met a group of governors.
- Inspectors met a representative group of trustees and officers from the King's Group Academies.
- Inspectors took account of 67 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as written comments submitted by 46 parents.
- Pupils' views were gathered from meetings with pupils from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, and from 57 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Informal conversations with pupils took place around the school and at different times of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation. This included leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, the school improvement plan, information about standards and pupils' progress, information on the school's website, records of pupils' attendance, governors' minutes and a range of policies and information, including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christopher Lee, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Carlyle	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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