

The James Hornsby School

Leinster Road, Laindon, Basildon, Essex SS15 5NX

Inspection dates	17–18 May 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and teachers have inspired their pupils with the school's vision for 'a lifelong love of learning', and standards have risen steadily as a result.
- The headteacher and senior team share the same high expectations and have been successful in improving both the quality of teaching, and subject leadership.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have effective subject knowledge. They make thorough use of assessment to plan challenging and interesting work for pupils of different abilities.
- Pupils are expected to learn well and are set demanding targets. Leaders and teachers make regular assessment checks and provide effective guidance to help them succeed.
- Pupils' progress is good in most subjects including English, mathematics and science and this is a result of improvements made to teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils, boys, and those who have special educational needs or disability make good progress in most subjects because of effective teaching and assessment.
- Leaders and teachers provide very good care and promote good behaviour. As a result, pupils' personal development, welfare and attitudes towards learning are very positive. Pupils are confident, work hard and feel safe.
- Pupils' attendance has greatly improved. Leaders and teachers have successfully ensured that all pupils and parents understand its importance.
- The curriculum is well organised to support the learning of all pupils. It supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Governors are effective and highly committed. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and hold leaders to account for its improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching in some key stage 3 science lessons is not consistently good.
- The progress of some lower-attaining pupils in mathematics is held back when they experience difficulty in completing higher-level calculations and more complex calculation problems.
- Some pupils make slower progress in developing their higher-level writing skills because they repeat the same spelling and grammatical errors.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support the progress of lower-attaining pupils in mathematics, by making sure that teachers thoroughly check their understanding of the methods they select when solving higher-level problems and complex calculations.
- Improve the standard of pupils' written work, by ensuring that they act upon advice given to improve their use of higher-level grammar and the accuracy of their spelling.
- Senior leaders should support the new science leader to share the best-quality teaching across the department, so that all pupils make consistently good progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- This school is very well led and has been significantly improved since its previous inspection. The headteacher and leaders have worked with determination to create a culture where pupils share a 'lifelong love of learning' and achieve their best. Parents and teachers support the work of leaders.
- Leaders, governors and teachers set very high expectations for pupils' attitudes, attendance and achievement. All staff offer great encouragement to pupils and build very supportive relationships. This has resulted in pupils becoming highly committed to attending school regularly and working very hard. These positive improvements have raised the quality of learning across the school and, along with good teaching, have contributed to rising standards.
- Self-evaluation is highly effective. Leaders have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and remaining areas for development. As a result, they have been able to create well-focused improvement plans which have allowed them to respond decisively to areas of underperformance in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school's target-setting system is central to improving pupils' achievement. Senior leaders guide all subject leaders to set demanding targets for pupils of all abilities. Effective and frequent monitoring of pupils' progress allows leaders and teachers to act quickly and support any pupils who are at risk of falling behind.
- Teaching has been significantly improved. Leaders understand the strengths of teaching across the school and carry out regular, accurate checks on the quality of teaching. They use a wide range of information to make their judgements, including lesson visits, pupils' work and assessment information. Underperformance is challenged very firmly, and all teachers are offered high-quality professional development which is well matched to their individual areas for improvement. Across most subjects, best practice is shared and teachers learn very well from each other.
- Leaders have successfully managed changes to staffing to avoid teacher shortages. Where required, some of the most effective teachers have been re-trained to teach other subjects including mathematics, and as a result of effective links with local teacher training providers, leaders have made it possible for new teachers to train at the school and join the staff.
- Arrangements for performance management are highly effective. Teachers are given demanding targets linked to the teachers' standards and pupils' achievement, and pay awards are always based on performance.
- Subject leaders are effective in most areas. They work closely with senior staff and focus on pupil achievement, the quality of teaching, and ensuring that pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are particularly effective in monitoring pupils' progress and making sure plans are in place to support groups or individuals who are experiencing difficulty. Leaders responsible for pupils with special educational needs or disability are equally effective, and teaching, care and assessment for these pupils are of high quality. However, recent changes to the leadership of science have prevented the best examples of teaching from being shared across a small number of classes in key stage 3 and, as a result, some teaching remains to be improved.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used very well and supports eligible pupils to recover their progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are offered effective reading support, including one-to-one tuition and a successful reading scheme which they enjoy. They also receive additional support in mathematics in order to restore their confidence with number work and move on to more challenging calculation skills.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively and systematically to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils are steadily reducing. They receive the same high-quality teaching as other pupils, as well as additional support and tuition. Their learning is closely monitored, and they regularly meet with pastoral leaders and the headteacher in order to discuss their progress and how they can improve.
- The curriculum is well organised to support pupils' good progress and personal development. It is broad and offers a strong balance of interesting subjects, as well as helping pupils to improve their skills of communication, literacy and numeracy. Pupils are guided well when making their choices for key stage 4 subjects and this helps prepare them well for their next stage of education or training. Alternative provision is organised for a small number of pupils and is well planned and relevant to their needs. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including competitive sports, science, music and drama. As a result of these improvements, the school has established its first orchestra. In addition, a

group of pupils have achieved national recognition for their skills in rocket engineering.

- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders have established useful links with the local member of parliament and pupils have had the opportunity to visit the House of Commons. They speak with confidence about their belief in democracy and electoral politics. They serve as elected councillors and give examples of how they have made decisions. They recognise the sacrifice others have made for their freedoms, including members of the armed forces and the suffragettes. They reject extremism and speak well of the school's programme, 'Educate against Hate'. They respect difference and the rule of law, and value personal liberty. Pupils also benefit from the guidance contained in the religious education and citizenship curriculum, as well as the detailed assembly programme. Consequently, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- Leaders benefit from the help of the sponsoring academy trust, which has helped them organise the school's improvement strategy. The local authority's 'standards and excellence secondary commissioner' has also provided effective support and challenge around the quality of teaching. Leaders have made effective use of both sources of help in order to continue their improvement work.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is effective and experienced and provides delegated local governance for the school within the wider academy trust. Governors are closely involved in the life of the school, visit frequently and make regular checks on leaders' work. They hold leaders to account for reaching the demanding targets which are set for attendance, personal development, teaching and pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching, which they use to ensure that arrangements for performance management reward effective teaching. They also check that school leaders are challenging underperformance and improving teaching where required.
 - Governors are skilled in the use of assessment information and reports provided by leaders. They use this knowledge to check on the progress of all pupils, and ensure that leaders make effective use of the pupil premium to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors are aware of their statutory duties for safeguarding and have received appropriate training. As a result, they are able to check that policies, systems and training are in place for all staff at the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders responsible are suitably trained, and policies and procedures are well established. Consequently, staff are clear on what to do in order to raise a concern within school, or with the relevant agencies, should the need arise. All visitors and staff are subject to appropriate checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and young people. The school communicates effectively with the local authority and other agencies, and this makes sure that its work with children looked after who attend the school is effective.
- Leaders and governors are proud of the recognition the school has received for its professional development of staff at all levels, known as 'The Investors in People Gold Award'. Equally, they are pleased with the recognition given to their efforts in securing the closer engagement of parents in the work of the school, known as 'The Leading Parent Partnership Award'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now typically good. Effective teaching in both key stage 3 and key stage 4 has improved pupils' learning in English, mathematics and most other subjects, including science. As a result, pupils currently attending the school are making good progress and standards are rising.
- Teachers have very high expectations for their pupils. They assess them accurately and have a clear understanding of their abilities when they join the school and as they progress through the different year groups. They use this assessment information and their thorough subject knowledge to plan work and activities which are challenging and well matched to pupils' different abilities. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, pupils were challenged to identify and explain the links between a scene from 'A View from the Bridge' and the wider themes of the play, in order to achieve the highest examination marks. The teacher's effective questioning and carefully-organised discussions led to high-quality answers and secured pupils' learning.

- Most teachers consistently follow the school's marking and feedback policy. However, there are instances when errors in more complex spelling and grammar are repeated because teachers have not followed the policy and checked that pupils have corrected them when advised.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear targets which set out what they ought to achieve by the end of each term or school year. Pupils appreciate the precise guidance they receive and are able to explain exactly what they need to do in order to improve.
- Teaching successfully promotes pupils' reasoning skills and this helps deepen their understanding of different subjects. For example, in a Year 9 physics lesson, pupils were able to identify and explain the properties of different types of electrical circuits and then predict which ones would present the greater risk if used to deliver national power supplies.
- Teaching promotes the importance of effective literacy. Pupils' written skills are developed effectively in most subjects, particularly when they are explaining their ideas and setting out arguments. This is because teaching has focused on supporting the structure and purpose of pupils' writing, along with the use of paragraphs. Reading is also well promoted, and pupils read widely and across different subjects. They are also encouraged to follow attractive reading schemes which build up their skills of analysis and interpretation of characters and stories. The library is very well used and pupils now borrow thousands of books each month.
- Mathematics teaching is effective and pupils make good progress. All pupils are taught to use their number knowledge with increasing confidence and apply it to increasingly difficult calculations and problems, which helps them develop their reasoning skills. However, in a small number of classes in key stage 3, lower-attaining pupils are not as confident when using some of the methods required for the most challenging work. Teachers sometimes take too long to notice this and help them to clear up their misunderstanding. As a result, their learning is slower than other pupils when tackling higher-level work.
- Homework is used effectively to help pupils secure their learning. It is set regularly and pupils and parents support the school's policy for homework.
- Teaching is well adapted for the needs of pupils with special educational needs or disability. Planning is very precise and each pupil receives personal attention and relevant support depending on their need. Teaching assistants are highly effective in their support for pupils' learning. They work closely with teachers to plan their work and they have a very detailed understanding of the needs of each pupil that they help.
- Teaching is effective in a range of subjects as well as English and mathematics. Teaching in design and technology, and business studies, is a strength, and it has rapidly improved also in music, drama, languages and humanities. In all of these subjects, teachers assess pupils accurately and ensure that work is well planned so as to help them make secure gains in knowledge and skills.
- Science teaching has improved since the previous inspection and it is currently good in key stage 4 and across most of key stage 3. However, in a small number of classes in key stage 3, teaching is not consistently good. The newly appointed subject leader is in the initial stages of supporting colleagues to share the best examples of teaching in order to improve the quality of all lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders have succeeded in bringing pupils together into a positive, caring school community which promotes high expectations for attitudes towards learning, relationships and attendance. The school's college system allows pastoral leaders to know every pupil very well and ensure that they are supported. Mixed-age form groups bring older and younger pupils together and older pupils are encouraged to take responsible roles in helping younger ones.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful to teachers, visitors and one another. They are proud of their school and wish to support it. They do so by taking up positions of responsibility and leadership including serving as elected school councillors and club leaders. They also make budgetary decisions about the use of charity funds and meet with governors to discuss the progress of the school and how it can still be improved.
- Attitudes towards learning are very mature and pupils are very cooperative with each other when working together in lessons. They do not give up when work is hard and they keep trying. They are motivated by

their targets, understand them and aspire to achieve them. Pupils are ambitious and many express a desire to join the ranks of prestigious professions including law, medicine, accountancy and aviation. These are the results of the positive encouragement of their teachers and their rising self-confidence.

- Pupils feel safe and looked after at school and are confident they would be supported if they needed to disclose any concerns to an adult. They believe all types of bullying are rare and teachers act quickly if bullying is reported. The school's commitment to 'educate against hate' is an important element of building good relationships and ensuring that pupils learn the civic skills which will help them to live together as adults. Parents agree that pupils are safe.
- Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is well developed. This is due to effective pastoral care and regular communications about the potential risks of the internet, protecting personal information from strangers, and the importance of exercise and a well-balanced diet. Older pupils also appreciate the useful advice which is made available at school on sex and relationship matters. They report that this helps them establish respectful, age-appropriate relationships.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Leaders and teachers use behaviour policies positively and consistently. They communicate the high expectations of the school and are good role models. As a result, pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school site is good and there is very little behaviour which disturbs learning.
- Pupils move around the site calmly, sensibly and considerately. They are well behaved in the dining areas, open spaces and library. In practical lessons and science, they behave safely.
- Leaders' work to improve attendance has been highly effective for all groups of pupils. Absence has reduced significantly and is currently below the national average. Persistent absence has also declined for all groups of pupils and it is also below the national average.
- The improvement in conduct, attitudes and attendance has been accompanied by a firm reduction in fixed-term exclusions, which are currently below the national average.
- School records show the number of behaviour-related incidents around the site and in lessons have clearly declined. Incidents involving prejudice-based bullying are rare, and pupils say they have the confidence to report them should they occur and that leaders and teachers will act quickly to help them.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- There has been a significant improvement in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. The progress of those currently attending the school is good in English, mathematics and science, as well as a wide range of other subjects. While past results have been lower than national averages, standards are rising steadily.
- The school is currently in its twelfth term since opening as a new academy in autumn 2012. There have been three sets of published results and pupils who took examinations in 2014 and 2015 completed only part of their education here. Results were significantly below average in 2014, but in 2015 the proportion of pupils who achieved at least five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, rose to 36%, which was nearer to the minimum standard set by the government. The school met the new minimum standard expected for progress, known as 'Progress 8'. Leaders' and teachers' assessments were thoroughly accurate in 2014 and 2015, and results achieved by pupils reflected the predictions made.
- The proportions of pupils making or exceeding the expected rates of progress in English and mathematics were below the national average in 2015. However, results in mathematics represented a significant improvement.
- Pupils currently in the school entered with standards far lower than typical for their age. Assessment information shared with inspectors, examination coursework results, and scrutiny of pupils' work, all show that progress is good for those pupils who are currently on roll in key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- Current standards in Year 11 and Year 10 are higher. Evidence gathered by inspectors indicates that results will continue to rise. The proportions of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics is now close to, or above, national results.
- Pupils' progress in science is now good in key stage 3 and key stage 4, following a period of under-achievement. The proportions of pupils likely to achieve good GCSE grades is near to the national average

and the proportions making good progress from their different starting points has significantly improved.

- Taking account of their very low starting points, pupils' achievement in a range of humanities, languages, and technical and performance subjects is much improved. Reliable school information indicates that attainment is likely to rise in 2016 and 2017, bringing pupils closer to the national average.
- Gaps in the progress being made by different groups of pupils are narrowing quickly. In 2015, boys did not achieve as well as girls in their GCSEs. The school has successfully worked to close this gap and boys' progress has improved across key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school have narrowed significantly since the previous inspection. In 2015, the progress they made from their different starting points improved but remained much lower than other pupils nationally and those within the school, and their attainment was also much lower. Throughout the school, their current achievement is much improved owing to their accelerated progress which is a result of effective teaching, assessment and progress checks.
- Taking account of their many different starting points, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability has accelerated because teachers carefully plan how to meet their needs and pay close attention to their learning during lessons, especially through the use of highly effective teaching assistants.
- The progress of the most able pupils has been good over time. Their achievement is well supported by demanding targets and learning activities which firmly challenge them in lessons. Arrangements to check on their progress are well established and they are provided with excellent support as they prepare for their examinations.
- The progress of pupils who attend part-time and full-time alternative education is good. They attend their placements regularly and their progress and welfare are carefully monitored. Leaders ensure that they are provided with suitable courses which match their interests and career ambitions. As a result they achieve well and are well prepared for future college courses, work or further training.
- Pupils value the high-quality impartial advice they are given when selecting their vocational studies and GCSEs. They are also clear about their future destinations when they reach the end of Year 11. Almost all go on to suitable employment and training, or education in the academy trust's sixth form, where programmes of study are well matched to their interests and ambitions.

School details

Unique reference number	138865
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011871

This inspection 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	786
Appropriate authority	The governing board
Chair	Brian Griffiths
Headteacher	Jason Carey
Telephone number	01268 582400
Website	www.jameshornsby.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@jameshornsby.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2014

Information about this school

- The James Hornsby School is an academy school and is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school opened in October 2012 and is sponsored by The King John School, Benfleet.
- The governing body consists of a local governing board, whose responsibilities are delegated to it by the trustees of the James Hornsby School Trust.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, mostly from European, Black African and Asian backgrounds, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils supported for special educational needs or disability is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan, is above average.
- Alternative arrangements are made for pupils to be taught off-site, both full time and part time, at Circles Farm, Circles Trade school, CSS Children Support Service, the Basildon Business Enterprise Partnership and Basildon YMCA.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 47 lessons. Ten were visited jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the executive headteacher, pupils from each year group, the school pupil council, members of the governing board and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders and staff responsible for teaching, assessment and pastoral care.
- Inspectors looked at a range of additional evidence including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation, information about pupil attainment and progress, records of lesson monitoring and minutes of the governing board's meetings.
- Inspectors scrutinised a selection of work from different subjects and year groups. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of responses to 44 questionnaires completed by staff, one comment received by way of a response to Parent View, Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, and the school's own parental survey.

Inspection team

David Turner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Herlock	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Patricia McLachlan	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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