

# Inspection of a good school: Chatham Grammar

Rainham Road, Chatham, Kent ME5 7EH

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

## Outcome

Chatham Grammar continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Wendy Walters. This school is part of University of Kent Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Kate Allen, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kim Lowe and Georgina Randsley de Moura.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Staff set high expectations for all pupils and do all they can to help them achieve and exceed their aspirations. The school's high-quality academic provision is matched in equal measure by its ambitious and extensive wider development programme. As a result, pupils here achieve well and develop the skills they need for employment and life in modern Britain. One parent summed up what this means for pupils when they told inspectors about their daughter, saying: 'Not only is she receiving a good education, but she is being nurtured into a strong, confident, resilient young woman.'

The environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils value others for who they are and respect each other regardless of beliefs or background. The school does not tolerate bullying or discriminatory language. Pupils know they have a trusted adult to whom they can turn with any concerns and that they would act swiftly to help them.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development exceptionally well. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Sixth-form students, like their younger peers, have high aspirations. Increasing numbers of students are gaining places at university. Most go on to the next stage of education, employment or training.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. The curriculum is well structured and organised to ensure that knowledge builds over time. There are no barriers to pupils' aspirations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from studying a wide range of subjects, including in the sixth form. All pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of qualifications.

Staff receive high-quality training. They use their detailed subject knowledge to teach new concepts clearly. Most teachers use questioning skilfully to deepen pupils' understanding, promote discussion and to ensure teaching builds on what they already know. As a result, most pupils achieve well and, where the curriculum and teaching are at their best, exceptionally well. Only in a minority of subjects does the consistency and quality of teaching vary. Consequently, the most able pupils, and some students in the sixth form, do not achieve the school's bold ambitions for their academic achievement. Leaders are alert to and proactively addressing the variations they have identified in how well the curriculum is delivered.

Pupils' well-being is prioritised. There is a highly effective pastoral system, which supports pupils' social and mental health. Staff ensure that pupils are treated as individuals, identifying their needs and giving them the support they require. A well-thought-out personal, social and health education programme enables pupils to develop an age-appropriate knowledge of risks in modern Britain and of online safety. Sixth-form students understand the implications of sexual harassment and would be confident to report this.

Behaviour and attitudes are excellent, and attendance is high. Consistently high expectations are modelled by staff. Pupils value the 'leadership points' system for rewarding good behaviours, such as 'taking responsibility' and 'sharing success'. As a result, pupils' conduct creates a positive environment, where learning is rarely interrupted.

Pupils' wider development is impressive. The school's offer goes well beyond the academic. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils enjoy a 'leadership' programme, which helps them develop skills such as critical thinking and public speaking. Ethics lessons ensure that pupils have a clear understanding and appreciation for different faiths, cultures and beliefs. A well-considered assembly and tutor programme engage pupils in a diverse range of spiritual, social, moral and cultural topics. Pupils embrace leadership roles in which they help others, develop confidence, contribute to the school community and learn new skills.

Pupils are highly aspirational. They receive unbiased information on potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance, and they benefit from frequent opportunities to explore their aspirations for university and apprenticeships. This prepares them well for the next stages of their lives.

The school is well led. Leaders are relentless in their desire to provide the absolute best education for all pupils and act decisively to address the school's priorities. Governors are knowledgeable and skilfully hold the school leaders to account and fulfil their duties. The school is committed to staff's well-being. Staff appreciate the support the trust offers, including high-quality training opportunities tailored to their career stage. This means that staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of subjects are not delivered in the way that leaders intend. This means that pupils are not consistently learning as well as they could across the whole curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all parts of the curriculum are delivered as intended so that pupils achieve consistently well across all of their subjects.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in May 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137389
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288008
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	979
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Kim Lowe and Georgina Randsley de Moura
<b>Chief executive officer of the trust</b>	Kate Allen (interim)
<b>Principal</b>	Wendy Walters
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.chathamgirlsgrammar.medway.sch.uk">www.chathamgirlsgrammar.medway.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, the school was using one registered provider of alternative provision.
- This school is part of University of Kent Academies Trust.
- The school shares its sixth form with Brompton Academy, which is also part of University of Kent Academies Trust.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils, and spoke to trustees, the interim chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and members of the local governing board.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers, and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also met with the geography subject lead and some pupils to consider curriculum thinking and pupils' learning in geography.
- Inspectors considered 179 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey, as well as the views of pupils, which were gathered throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- Inspectors met with the school special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.

### **Inspection team**

James Stuart, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Potten

Ofsted Inspector

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