

# Fulston Manor School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136324
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	367439
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bill Stoneham

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	High school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1170
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rita Couzins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Brookes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27–28 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Brenchley Road Sittingbourne Kent ME10 4EG
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	23–24 May 2011
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Forty lessons, each involving a different teacher, were observed and meetings were held with various groups of students, governors and staff. In addition, inspectors observed the school's work, looked at various policy documents including evidence of its self-evaluation and its safeguarding arrangements. They considered questionnaire responses from staff, students and 252 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Fulston Manor is a larger than average school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average and the student population is stable. Most students are of White British heritage; very few have a first language other than English. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number of students with a statement of special educational needs. Most needs relate to behavioural, social and emotional issues or language and communication skills. Over the last three years, the school has consistently exceeded the government's GCSE floor targets. The school has won many awards including being recognised as a specialist business and enterprise college in 2005. In October 2010 academy status was conferred. The sixth form is growing and, at this level, the school works in partnership with two neighbouring grammar schools.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety</b>	<b>1</b>
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

## Key findings

- Fulston Manor is an outstanding school led by an inspirational and visionary headteacher with strong and effective leadership and management at all levels, including the governing body. This is a highly successful school that is relentless in its quest to improve further.
- The school is a very happy one. Students enjoy their education and behave extremely well.
- School leaders have successfully built on the strengths identified in the previous Ofsted report. Consequently, the school has continued to improve rapidly.
- All students receive a rich and varied education that meets their individual needs and prepares them well for the next steps in their lives. Achievement is outstanding because of the quality of the curriculum.
- Students' achievement is outstanding because students are taught by a very skilled and dedicated team of staff, whose morale is high. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Detailed and robust assessment systems also contribute to the outstanding outcomes.
- The quality of the school's partnership with an array of different agencies makes a significant contribution to the learning of all students.
- Learning is also aided by the students' outstanding behaviour and the maturity students show in terms of staying safe and helping one another in their work.
- The sixth form is improving at a good pace and standards are rising.
- The school has forged a strong reputation well beyond its immediate locality. Its success as a business and enterprise college, for example, has been recognised nationally with Fulston Manor students receiving national awards for their enterprising activities.
- Students take their responsibilities seriously and are keen to help others. Support for local charities, such as Demelza House, illustrates their desire to help others.

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

- Raise attainment even further by ensuring that in those lessons where learning is less consistent staff:
  - seize every opportunity to develop the literacy skills of students by encouraging them to write in an extended form and for different audiences.

## Main report

Fulston Manor is an outstanding school. The strong leadership of the headteacher, allied to the support offered from an excellent and dedicated staff, has ensured that the school has built successfully on its previously identified strengths and has continued to improve at an impressive rate. This improvement has been helped by the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. This has ensured that areas where performance has been less effective have been addressed. Partnerships with other schools in the vicinity have benefited the students, especially in the sixth form, through offering access to a broad and highly relevant curriculum. Key Stages 3 and 4 students have benefited from many different curriculum initiatives associated with the school's business and enterprise status. Encouraging students to adopt enterprising approaches to their studies has helped to boost confidence and improved skills such as numeracy and decision-making. Support offered to schools that are performing less well and work with other highly successful schools has enhanced the professional development of staff and heightened their classroom effectiveness. A strong commitment to staff development has been a key component in ensuring that the school continues to improve at an impressive pace.

Achievement in Years 7 to 11 is outstanding; it is good in the sixth form and is improving strongly. Most students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make rapid and sustained progress over time given their starting points. Students enter the school with levels of prior attainment that are below average for their age. By the end of Year 11, their attainment is far better than predicted. GCSE results overall and for those gaining five A\* to C grades (including English and mathematics) are above the national average and have improved significantly over the last three years. Students make strong progress in mathematics because they are taught well. Outcomes in English are especially impressive. Attainment in English is well above the national average at GCSE. These outcomes can also be attributed to the quality of the teaching offered, plus the care taken to enhance the students' literacy skills. Attainment is above average in a number of other subjects, including art, and design and technology. As one parent commented, 'Our daughter has thrived. She is on course to do very well in her GCSEs. We are delighted!'

Current students make outstanding progress. Detailed tracking systems used by the school to monitor progress indicate that there will be a further improvement in the

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school's GCSE results this summer. This confident prediction is supported by the evidence from early GCSE entries, where a significant number of students have already acquired passes at grade C or above in English and/or mathematics. All groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are achieving very well according to their abilities. The school is aware that in recent years girls have tended to outperform boys. Sensitive and appropriate strategies have been taken to address this and the gap in performance is quickly closing. Students finishing Year 11 are extremely well placed for their next stage, whether this is in education, training or employment.

Standards in the sixth form show a trend of rapid improvement. Every year a number of students opt to study their A levels at local grammar schools. This skews the school's sixth form entry profile so that students begin their A-level studies with prior levels of attainment lower than those found nationally. By the end of Year 13, examination results are in line with national average figures and are improving well. Significant improvements in results have been gained over the last three years and course completion rates are high.

The students' outstanding achievements owe much to the excellent teaching the students receive. Teachers are enthusiastic and demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge. Progress in most lessons is at least good. In a significant minority it is outstanding because of the challenging and thoughtful teaching provided. Teachers have high expectations of all students and set them appropriately challenging tasks. Staff know their students well and highly effective monitoring and assessment systems enable them to set work that meets the needs of different groups. Students learn particularly well when they work independently or in small groups. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities frequently make great strides in their learning. A key contributory factor is that teaching assistants are involved in lesson planning and they offer considerable help to the students assigned to them. This careful planning enables such students to make impressive gains in their knowledge and understanding. Most work is marked and assessed extremely well. Assessment techniques, including high quality oral feedback in lessons, are detailed and thorough. Students understand in detail how to improve their work. This is especially true for students with statements for special educational needs. They are consistently extremely well supported in order to meet their challenging targets successfully.

Examples of outstanding teaching included a most impressive Year 10 art lesson on portrait skills. Students made exceptional progress because the task enabled them to develop their creative and evaluative skills. Learning was fostered extremely well by the opportunities students had to model their work and then to offer constructive views about their own work and that completed by their peers. This was accompanied by excellent teacher feedback. Excellent progress was also observed in a Year 8 geography lesson. Many of the students in this lesson experience difficulties in their learning. Their progress was outstanding because the work was planned well to meet specific individual needs and the students were supported most effectively by the learning assistants and the teacher. In a Year 12 law lesson students were

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split into small groups and had to evaluate various legal situations. The learning in this lesson was particularly rapid and impressive. The high-quality teaching seen by inspectors reflects the views of parents. Some 95% of respondents to the parent/carer questionnaire rated teaching as at least good. In their own questionnaire over 90% of students reported that they are well taught and that they learn very well in their lessons.

As a successful business and enterprise college, the school places a strong emphasis on developing the students' skills in literacy, numeracy and communication. Staff work highly effectively to promote these skills. In most lessons students are offered scope to write imaginatively, or to analyse and evaluate issues and events. Such activities promote high-quality learning. On the rare occasions where the pace of learning is slower, it is because of some minor inconsistencies in promoting literacy skills, including opportunities for students to write in an extended form or for different audiences. This restricts creativity and analysis.

The school offers a safe, secure and pleasant learning environment. Students are highly supportive of one another and feel safe at all times. Student safety is given high priority and safeguarding arrangements are at least good. Although a small minority of parents raised concerns about behaviour, most are happy. Most parents and carers indicated that behaviour is at least good. Any incidents of bullying are handled appropriately and they are happy with the arrangements for student safety. The school takes a strong stance against bullying. Incidents are rare and students expressed confidence in their staff to deal with any issues that might arise. Students take a major role themselves in trying to prevent incidents and supporting those who might be the victims of bullying. The peer mentoring system that exists was praised by the students. The success of the system has been recognised by the school receiving national awards for its work. In their own questionnaire, students indicated that behaviour is at least good and staff deal with rare incidents of unpleasantness well. Findings from the inspection fully endorse these outcomes. Inspectors were hugely impressed by the outstanding behaviour they saw. In public areas around the school, students' behaviour was excellent. In lessons, outstanding behaviour was the norm and made a significant contribution to learning because classes were settled and students knew that they were there to learn. Not only do students behave well, they are punctual and attendance is above average.

The promotion of excellent behaviour, the work done to ensure that bullying is rare and the encouragement of responsibility are all key features of the excellent provision the school makes for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students are encouraged to think deeply about their own and others' experiences. The emphasis on enterprise, promoted through the school's business and enterprise specialism, promotes considerable interest in ethical issues. During the last academic year, students won three national awards in an ethical business challenge sponsored by a national retail chain. This emphasis on an ethical approach to enterprise has a moral dimension enabling students with differing aptitudes and abilities to realise that they can succeed and that success can manifest itself in a variety of ways.

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Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. The pursuit of excellence is underpinned by a relentless and uncompromising drive to improve the outcomes for all. Staff are determined to help all students succeed. They are extremely well supported in this drive by a highly effective governing body. The governing body supports the school well, but also challenges and holds it to account.

There is a strong focus on ensuring teaching and learning continually improves. The school's commitment to the professional development of staff is excellent and has resulted in even higher standards. Results at all levels, including the sixth form, continue to improve, frequently at a rate faster than that recorded nationally. Many factors contribute to this success. These include the detailed and thorough arrangements that exist for target setting and monitoring the performance of each student against aspirational targets. Such attention to detail has led to improved outcomes and equality of opportunity for all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is no evidence of discrimination in any of the school's work. The effectiveness of the monitoring procedures and the emphasis on being enterprising have led to gaps in performance closing and provided many students, including those who may meet with less academic success, with other opportunities to excel. Successes at national events such as the ethical business production challenge illustrate this. The school's record of sustained improvement amply illustrates the ambition and drive of the superb senior staff team. Through rigorous self-evaluation, this team knows its strengths and areas for development and plans carefully to address these issues. This represents an outstanding capacity to improve further.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fulston Manor School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 252 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	103	41	133	53	15	6	1	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	107	42	130	51	12	5	2	1
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	106	42	126	50	15	6	6	2
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	87	34	142	56	19	8	3	1
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	101	40	134	53	12	5	4	2
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	98	39	140	55	10	4	3	1
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	59	23	156	62	34	13	2	1
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	46	18	125	49	68	27	13	5
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	70	28	138	55	27	11	4	2
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	72	28	145	57	23	9	6	2
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	88	35	130	51	22	9	12	5
Q12 The school is well led and managed	107	42	124	49	12	5	7	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The achievement of all pupils.</li> <li>■ Behaviour and safety.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of leadership and management.</li> </ul> <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 May 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Fulston Manor School, Sittingbourne ME10 4EG**

My colleagues and I thoroughly enjoyed our recent visit. I wish to thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed talking to you and learning about your views. You told us that the school is outstanding and that you are happy with the education you receive. The inspection confirms that your school offers an outstanding education.

Many things really impressed us. You are taught very well and your teachers are keen for you to succeed. Many of the lessons we observed featured either good or outstanding learning. In most lessons the work set was challenging and engaged you. However, where the learning was slower, lessons were less effective. In order to improve your learning further, we have asked your headteacher to ensure that all teachers:

- consistently help you improve your literacy skills by ensuring key words are displayed in lessons and are referred to and explained
- offer you more opportunities to produce pieces of extended written work and to write in different styles
- ensure that when your work is marked you are provided with clear guidance on how you can improve.

Another reason why your progress is so very good is because of your own attitudes. You showed great keenness in lessons; your attendance is above average; and, your behaviour is outstanding. By maintaining these very high standards you can help your staff secure the improvements we have requested.

We were also pleased to hear about your involvement in many activities. You certainly do many different things. We enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you every success in your future endeavours. In particular, we would like to wish those of you involved in the ethical enterprise challenge every success with your presentations. We also hope that Year 12 business students enjoy great success with the event they are organising to raise funds for Demelza House.

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham  
Lead inspector

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