

Bradfields Academy

Churchill Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME5 0LB

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Together, the principal and guardian principal provide outstanding leadership, ably supported by very capable senior and middle leaders. Staff share leaders' high expectations of pupils. Therefore, a culture of ambition and enthusiasm to secure positive futures for all pupils flows throughout the school.
- Subject leadership is strong, especially in the secondary phase. High expectations are widespread across all subjects. However, these leaders' skills and knowledge should be used more effectively to support staff who are new to holding leadership roles.
- All pupils make excellent progress from their different starting points. Consequently, any differences between pupils' achievements and those of other pupils nationally are diminishing quickly.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers are reflective about their practice. Teachers' superb subject knowledge is used to engage, challenge and support pupils in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils demonstrate excellent manners, consideration, empathy and respect towards each other and adults and so model British values very well. They exude an intrinsic pride in their work and a love of learning.
- Students in the sixth form thrive because their individual needs are met exceptionally well. Students have a wealth of opportunities to build on what they have already achieved both academically and personally. They are extremely well prepared for life beyond the school and to be successful young adults.
- Pupils flourish because they are extremely well looked after in a nurturing and enabling environment.
- Leaders are relentless in their pursuit of school improvement and seize every opportunity available to participate in research projects and to work with other schools in the local area. This outward-looking attitude has contributed significantly to the school's strengths. Leaders feel a moral obligation to work collaboratively with other schools to further raise pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders are eager for pupils to continually improve their academic and personal outcomes. They know that there is always more scope to include parents in their children's learning, and to continue to raise parents' aspirations for their children.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to help parents feel confident in supporting their children's academic and personal development to aid the school in their aspirations for pupils to achieve highly and to become independent young adults.
- Build even greater leadership capacity by sharing expertise more widely across the school, and in particular between the primary and secondary phase.
- Further develop opportunities for staff at this school to share their expertise with colleagues further afield to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the wider community through outreach and other means.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have engendered a joy of learning and sense of belonging that is shared by staff and pupils. Leaders have galvanised staff in the pursuit of excellence and nurtured a self-improving, ambitious ethos that enables pupils to blossom and prosper. One member of staff captured the views of many by saying, 'I love my job and wouldn't want to be anywhere else.'
- Leaders, governors and all staff know the strengths of the school in impressive detail. Commendably, they are never complacent and continually analyse the school's effectiveness to find out what could be even better. Leaders use this information to formulate precise plans to forge school improvement, and do it extremely well.
- Middle leaders contribute very effectively to school development and are animated about their areas of responsibility. They have been vital in improving the quality of teaching and provide worthwhile feedback and support to help colleagues improve. Middle leaders value the opportunities and additional training they have received to give them the skills necessary to undertake their roles.
- Leaders undertake a range of activities to evaluate the quality of teaching throughout the school. They provide support and mentoring to help staff improve their expertise and instigate rapid improvement plans when initial support does not pay dividends. Staff performance is tightly monitored in order to hold staff to account for the academic and pastoral development of pupils. However, staff are enormously keen to improve their practice because a culture of continuous learning pervades the school. Consequently, the quality of teaching has gone from strength to strength, resulting in excellent outcomes for pupils.
- Additional government funding, including special educational needs funding, is used extremely well as a vehicle to affect improvement to pupils' outcomes. For example, Year 7 catch-up funding is used throughout key stage 3 to ensure that the difference between pupils' achievement and that of other pupils nationally diminishes. Leaders have targeted reading, for example, by engaging additional adults to read with pupils. A love of reading is now widespread, resulting in improved achievement in reading across key stage 3.
- Leaders' use of the primary sports funding has increased the proportion of pupils engaging in sport, improved teachers' skills in delivering physical education (PE) and enabled pupils to access other sports, including swimming and trampolining. Leaders have considered carefully how this funding can also meet the additional needs of pupils. For instance, pupils learn the early stages of cycling by developing their core strength and balance on specially adapted bicycles.
- The needs of pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding are extremely well met. Funding is allocated effectively to ensure that the academic, emotional and social needs of pupils are provided for. Leaders have focused on providing the very best provision for each pupil, and as a result, pupils make the same outstanding progress as other pupils in the school.
- Leaders have designed a bespoke curriculum that meets the wide range of special

educational needs and abilities of pupils. This curriculum ensures that pupils make rapid progress in a wide range of subjects, including in French, Polish and Mandarin Chinese. Pupils' learning is enriched by an abundance of trips, workshops and opportunities to participate in events outside of school. For example, pupils regularly display their art work in galleries.

- Assessment procedures are in place to track pupils' progress through the school's bespoke curriculum. This robust tracking system is being used systematically by staff to bring about rapid improvements to outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. Leaders' analysis of pupils' performance information is extensive and accurate, which allows them to intervene swiftly to ensure that no pupils are left behind and the most able pupils are doing as well as they should.
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic education is developed thoroughly. Leaders track the progress that pupils make so that they are able to offer additional activities to help pupils acquire important skills for life, such as resilience and perseverance. In addition, the school teaches topics such as, personal freedom, patriotism and fair play, all of which instil values that prepare pupils fully for life in modern Britain.
- The school's strategy for managing pupils' behaviour is very well understood by staff and pupils. Staff act as excellent role models to pupils in their care. Staff have very high expectations of pupils' conduct and learning behaviours which pupils live up to. Pupils understand how they will be rewarded for showing good and positive behaviour and are clear about the consequences of making poor decisions. As a result, an atmosphere of serenity permeates the school that is exceptionally conducive to learning.
- Outreach is an integral part of the school's outward-looking philosophy. The outreach service provides training, coaching, mentoring and support for schools in designing a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have generously shared their own expertise and that of the staff to improve the provision for these pupils in Medway and surrounding local authorities. All staff are keen to continue to share what they have achieved to benefit the wider community.
- Leaders have used research as a tool for school improvement. This approach has paid dividends and has enabled leaders to find innovative ways to aid them in their relentless endeavour to provide the very best for pupils. For example, the school is working with The Prince's Teaching Institute to develop research into securing successful transition from Year 6 to Year 7, to reduce pupils' anxiety and secure continuous provision.
- Leaders work hard to enable parents to become active participants in their children's education. They are currently undertaking a review of home learning that is focused on parents and their children working together to strengthen pupils' life skills. The school provides parents with a wealth of opportunities to learn about the curriculum and to develop their own understanding of computing and mathematics, for example. Focused coffee mornings give parents vital chances to discuss their children's needs and to learn about benefits that they may be entitled to claim.
- Parents feel welcome and enjoy getting involved with after-school activities, such as Guides, and in supporting events organised by the parents and teachers' association.

Even so, leaders recognise that there is still more work to be done to help parents to confidently support their children's academic and personal growth. This would help the school in their drive to further help pupils to become aspirational and independent young people.

Governance of the school

- Governors are focused on the strategic direction of the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school in depth because they are dedicated and committed to their responsibilities.
- Governors actively seek to strengthen collaboration and partnerships, to share practice and improve the school further. They share leaders' ambitions for pupils and, as a result, they are a positive influence on the lives of pupils, and discharge their statutory duties exceptionally well.
- The governing body ensures that systems to manage staff performance are implemented effectively and that any increases to teachers' pay relate to pupils' achievements.
- Governors add to the capacity of the school to improve further because they challenge and support leaders and complete 'task and finish' exercises to validate the work of the school for themselves.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies and procedures in place are of the highest order and ensure that staff and volunteers are clear about their responsibility to safeguard pupils.
- Timely training and frequent updates ensure that school staff have the most up-to-date knowledge of legislation, including how to protect pupils from the risk of extremism and radicalisation. Leaders make certain that training is used well to impact on safeguarding practice and to ensure the safety of pupils.
- The school's procedures for checking the suitability of staff and adults to work with children are robust. New staff receive detailed induction training that helps them to understand immediately what to do, and who to inform, if a pupil makes a safeguarding disclosure to them.
- There are many examples where leaders have doggedly pursued the best outcomes for the most vulnerable pupils in their care who need help and protection. They work closely with other agencies and professionals to provide the best possible support for pupils.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that staff teach them how to stay safe. Older pupils learn about issues such as gang culture and the consequences of alcohol abuse and anti-social behaviour. Pupils' understanding of cyber bullying and how to stay safe online is particularly strong. The school's work in this area is exemplary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because teachers impart their superb subject knowledge exceptionally well. Consequently, pupils quickly acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics which enables them to succeed highly across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well all of the time. Pupils respond to these high expectations very well. Pupils know that staff aspire for them to achieve well and, subsequently, they too are ambitious.
- Pupils are absolutely clear about what they are learning and why. Staff consistently share learning intentions with pupils and provide helpful advice for them about how to be successful learners. Pupils are guided sensitively to know precisely what they need to do to achieve their own personal targets and to improve the quality of their work. They are able to draw upon what they have learned in the past and apply this to new learning, helping them to make rapid progress across all subjects.
- Teachers use information about how well pupils are achieving in each subject to plan challenging activities that meet the needs of pupils accurately. Pupils' work is pitched precisely to build on what they know and understand. Pupils who are struggling with their work are quickly identified so that they can catch up with their classmates.
- Staff are skilful at questioning pupils. They probe and enable pupils to expand and justify their answers. Opportunities for collaborative learning and discussion abound and provide pupils with endless chances to develop their language and communication skills. For instance, in a key stage 4 lesson pupils learned about education across the world and pondered the question, 'Should children have an education?'
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support to pupils and are highly professional and skilled in their interactions with them. Teachers plan effectively to make certain that additional adults are clear about which pupils they are supporting and why. Therefore, pupils who need help to understand their learning and to engage, and pupils who need additional challenges to make good progress, are extremely well supported.
- Teachers use subject-specific language consistently across the range of subjects and expect pupils to do the same. For example, in a Year 7 PE lesson, pupils worked in pairs to form human bridges by practising their balancing skills in gymnastics. They used words such as, 'crab' and 'plank', alongside positional language such as, 'beneath' and 'alongside', to explain what they were doing.
- The most able pupils are challenged within class, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to help them think more deeply and attempt work that requires them to reason and apply what they know. Teachers carefully consider the needs of the most able pupils when they are planning lessons so that work is never too easy for them. Pupils' work demonstrates the excellent progress they make and, consequently, this group are achieving more highly every year. Two former pupils are now studying at degree level.
- Very occasionally, the materials and resources available to pupils do not match their chronological age. Therefore, resources, especially reading texts, are not quite age-appropriate and would usually be associated with younger pupils. Nonetheless, staff have considered the emotional and academic needs of pupils and try to provide

materials that interest pupils and swiftly move learning forward.

- Mathematics is taught very well in all key stages. Staff provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to reinforce their basic mathematics skills and to rehearse their mental arithmetic. Staff skilfully help pupils to understand the number operations needed to solve problems. The most able pupils work towards attaining GCSE mathematics, occasionally achieving grades A to C.
- Pupils read well because the early stages of reading are taught thoroughly. Pupils are able to tackle new words confidently and those at the earliest stages of reading use their phonics knowledge to identify the sounds that letters make. With support, pupils can decipher and infer the meaning of words, such as 'reassuringly'. A love of reading is fostered through a wide variety of strategies, such as using volunteer readers. As a result, pupils are confident and fluent readers who demonstrate competent comprehension skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing and therefore pupils make consistently strong progress. Pupils spell well and use increasingly tricky punctuation and grammar. Their vocabulary expands to include a range of adjectives, verbs and adverbs to make their writing more exciting for the reader. Pupils take great pride in their work. Their presentation and handwriting are immaculate. Most pupils write copiously and well, examples being: 'Growth lived with his father because his mother ran away after his birth' and, 'One miserable, cold, rainy and thundery night, a baby was born. The boy was named Achmed.'
- Strong teaching across the curriculum helps pupils to become immersed in learning and transfer their reading and writing skills across the range of subjects offered. The very best practice can be seen in the secondary phase of the school. Here, subject specialists communicate highly effectively with one another to ensure that expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high. Some subject specialists, such as for PE, teach primary-aged pupils. However, subject leaders recognise the need to work even more closely with teachers and leaders of the primary phase, to ensure that subject progression between the key stages is seamless, and that learning is even better.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. British values, such as respect and acceptance, are woven effortlessly throughout the school's ethos and curriculum. As a result, pupils are resilient, well considered and mature. As one member of staff wrote: 'The students are wonderful, challenging and surprising. They reward me daily, reminding me of why I wanted to become a teacher.'
- Pupils who attend Strood Academy and local colleges prosper from the increasing opportunities they have to integrate with mainstream pupils, and to access a range of specialist facilities. Their confidence and ability to socialise have improved immensely as a result, which is tremendous preparation for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities afforded to them by the school. For instance, pupils are

elected to be representatives on the student curriculum council. Pupils feel that they can make a real difference to their own educational experience through council membership. Pupils have taken part in learning walks to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the school and some have given presentations about international partnerships and improved their public speaking as a result.

- The school is working towards the re-accreditation of the Investors in Pupils Award. This has sharpened the focus on pupils being involved in their education through key areas such as learning, behaviour, attendance and punctuality. The school fosters an enabling environment that allows pupils to aspire. Pupils have faultless attitudes to learning in all lessons and want to do well because leaders help them to aim high.
- Pupils have many opportunities to raise funds for charitable organisations. The academy council is currently exploring the charity Changing Faces and the school's 'houses' raise funds for the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Service. Through this, pupils develop a deeper understanding and empathy for the community in which they live.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they are safe. The school provides pupils with ample opportunities to learn how to be healthy, including, for older pupils, information relating to sexual health. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care that the school provides and the safety of their children.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. During this inspection, pupils managed their own behaviour splendidly and no inappropriate behaviour was observed at Bradfields Academy or at Strood Academy. Pupils are extremely well-mannered and respectful towards adults and their classmates.
- Consistent implementation of the school's behaviour policy, which is buttressed by positive relationships, has resulted in excellent attitudes to learning and exemplary conduct. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen dramatically over the past few years because pupils quickly understand what is expected of them and learn to regulate their own emotions.
- Pupils are positive about behaviour at the school. They understand that some of their classmates struggle occasionally because of their special educational needs. Pupils demonstrate extraordinary compassion and respect of each other's differences and say that all pupils are treated equally and with respect by adults.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They are adamant that it does not happen at their school. They say that inappropriate language is seldom heard and is never used casually in conversations between pupils.
- Pupils of all ages interact and play well with each other at breaktimes because there is a strong sense of togetherness which is shared between pupils and between pupils and staff. This is also true for pupils at Strood Academy where they played football with their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Routines and expectations are well established, and these result in a calm and safe environment. Pupils come into school promptly at the start of the day so that no learning time is lost and transition between lessons, between activities, and to

breaktime is rapid and unruffled.

- Pupils enjoy school. They have an intrinsic desire to learn and enthusiastically talk about their work and about the strong friendships they have formed. Consequently, attendance is above the national average for special schools and is closing rapidly towards the national average for secondary schools. Unauthorised absence is exceptionally rare. One member of staff stated, 'Students always seem happy to be attending the academy, as they always want to be in, even when they are poorly.'

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is typically well below that expected for their chronological age. However, from their different starting points, pupils make remarkably strong progress to speedily diminish the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils enter the early years and the primary phase with very low starting points academically, and often have additional complex learning needs. Pupils quickly make excellent progress because the early years and primary curriculum is tailored exceptionally well to meet their academic and special educational needs.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics and English is especially strong and, because of this, pupils are equipped with the skills they need to continue as learners in the future.
- Leaders have ensured that the most able pupils also make extremely strong progress to attain highly in their GCSEs and, when applicable, to reach level 3 qualifications. Increasingly, pupils are attaining higher and higher outcomes. Leaders are alert to the fact that the options they provide need continual review to enable the most able pupils to thrive. Leaders have ensured that there is no ceiling on what pupils can achieve. The most able pupils who are also emotionally robust are making the same, highly effective, progress at Strood Academy.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including pupils who are looked after, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make the same strong progress as other pupils in the school. Nearly all pupils make expected progress from their different starting points and the majority make even greater progress. As a result, these pupils are catching up rapidly with the achievement of other pupils nationally. For some pupils, the achievement gap is eradicated entirely.
- The number of pupils achieving GCSE qualifications is increasing swiftly. This reflects the high expectations of staff for pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on securing learning in every subject and endeavour to strengthen pupils' transferable skills from one subject to another. Consequently, pupils' attainment in other curriculum subjects, such as art, science, drama and history is consistently high.
- Pupils make rapid progress in their speaking, listening and communication skills. This prepares pupils superbly to answer questions, take part in discussions and to talk confidently with other pupils, staff and unfamiliar adults. In a key stage 4 drama lesson, pupils answered questions about themselves and their own interests and had to define the qualities they liked in others. Pupils improvised their answers, providing useful practice in effective communication for the future. Pupils identified ways to

improve their speech and body language in order to develop the way they present themselves to others.

- Pupils achieve a wide range of accreditation, including GCSEs, entry-level certificates, BTEC national diplomas and ASDAN awards. Subjects available to pupils are vast, and include computing, history, drama, photography and Mandarin Chinese to name but a few. This means that pupils are able to access courses that reflect their interests and are meaningful for their chosen pathways when they leave the school.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education and continue to build on accreditations offered by the school. The school transforms pupils' lives and opens up the world to them. One parent reflected this by writing, 'The only problem Bradfields has is that the students I know never want to leave!'

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The sixth form is well led by knowledgeable and experienced leaders who aspire highly for students. Leaders know students' needs and interests exceptionally well because of positive relationships and a deep understanding of students' special educational needs.
- Leaders have an acute awareness of the strengths of the sixth form provision and what could be even better. They, like all leaders, are not complacent in their endeavour to provide students with the best possible stepping stones for the future. For example, leaders plan to increase the opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, by electing a lead boy and lead girl who will represent pupils on the governing body.
- Due to the success, and therefore growing reputation, of the sixth form offer, the number of students transferring from local mainstream and special schools is growing rapidly. This is because of the wealth of options accessible to students that are unavailable elsewhere.
- Students have access to a wide range of subjects, both academic and vocational, that reflect their interests and abilities. There is a clear focus on underpinning students' subject options with opportunities to develop their sporting skills and to learn how to live healthier lives.
- Students' achievements are exceptional because the quality of teaching is outstanding. They make rapid progress from their different starting points in a range of courses. They continuously build on their accreditation to achieve highly, because the school is ambitious for them and learning meets their needs extremely well.
- Students' behaviour and wonderful attitudes to learning reflect those found in the rest of the school. This makes a massive contribution to students' readiness to learn. They have high expectations for their own futures. Consequently, students recognise the importance of education and their good attendance reflects their desire to do well.
- Preparation for life is a fundamental and entrenched aspect of the post-16 curriculum. This includes preparation for the workplace, developing entrepreneurial skills and learning how to care for, and be part of, the wider community. Students' social skills, including the ability to interact on a personal level, are superb as a result.
- All students undertake work-related learning. They attend a work placement each week, for example on farms, in local stores and at football clubs. This provides

students with excellent preparation for their future working lives. In addition, some students have gained part-time employment and apprenticeships as a result of their excellent attitudes and hard work during work placements. For example, one student is now a tour guide at Rochester Cathedral.

- Students take part in a young driver's course. Two students are now drivers as a result. Five students have recently gained the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. These opportunities, among others, have allowed students' confidence to flourish and prepared them well in their endeavours towards becoming independent young adults.
- Students attend extended residential experiences of up to two weeks, where they undertake a charitable project to promote responsible citizenship. This has included painting a local temple. Additionally, students have learned about democracy, and have representation on the Medway Youth Parliament.
- Leaders have forged strong links with local colleges, such as Hadlow College and Mid-Kent College. This has enabled them to offer a plethora of courses that closely match students' talents and interests, such as dog grooming and pigeon racing.
- Effective liaison between school and college leaders means that the progress that students make is communicated well to school leaders, so that they can be satisfied that students are getting the best possible experiences and outcomes. Furthermore, school leaders monitor off-site courses carefully, to check that the quality of teaching is good enough for their students. Leaders are continually seeking further opportunities to extend the options available to students.
- The school offers continued education for students beyond the age of 18. This additional year enables students to continue to embed their core learning within subjects, such as English and mathematics, so that they are better prepared for the future and are able to successfully sustain college placements when they leave the school.
- Students have secured and sustained meaningful placements at college, in education or within the world of work over the last 10 years when they have left the school. The school's success in this area is significantly above that found nationally. Students' success in their future lives is a mark of the superb support they have received during their time at Bradfields Academy.

School details

Unique reference number	140701
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10024539

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special school
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Martin
Principal	Mr Kim Johnson
Telephone number	01634 683990
Website	www.bradfieldsacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@bradfieldsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bradfields Academy is a special school for pupils who have complex learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils also have speech, language, sensory, physical and autistic spectrum conditions. It occupies a large site situated within a residential area of Chatham in Medway.
- Four years ago, the school re-designated to include the early years and key stages 1 and 2. This was to provide an additional 20 school places for pupils of this age. There are too few children in the early years to report on this part of the school separately, without identifying individual children. Provision for children in the early years is

evaluated in each of the other sections of this report.

- The school also includes off-site provision at Strood Academy for pupils aged 11 to 16, known as Bradfields Academy@Strood Academy, which is nearly five miles from the main site. The provision provides inclusive opportunities for pupils who are academically and emotionally able to manage integration within a mainstream provision for part of their timetable.
- The principal is currently on secondment with the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) in his capacity as president of that association. In his absence, the school has been led by a guardian principal since May 2016.
- More boys than girls attend the school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a relatively small number of pupils of other ethnicities. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average. A much higher proportion of pupils are looked after by the local authority than is found nationally.
- The school is organised into four learning zones where most classes are taught by the stage of their learning. The blue zone, which extends across the schools five key stages and includes the early years, is for pupils whose primary need is autism. The yellow zone is for key stage 3 classes, the red zone is for key stage 4 classes and the green zone is for Years 12 to 14.
- The school uses alternative vocational courses off-site at Mid-Kent College and Hadlow College at different times during the week for key stage 4 pupils and post-16 students.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Most pupils are referred to the school by Medway Council, but some are referred from neighbouring authorities.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes on 39 occasions. The majority of lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited the school’s provision at Strood Academy on two occasions.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, and members of staff who hold a wide variety of responsibilities. Inspectors also met with representatives of the governing body and contacted two governors by telephone, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to an independent school improvement adviser who works alongside the school.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, school self-evaluation, the curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, reports on the quality of teaching, and assessment records.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the school day and observed them on the playground at the main school site and at Strood Academy. They also met formally with a group of pupils to gather their views about the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils reading.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in books in a wide range of subjects, including writing and mathematics.
- Inspectors observed pupils during tutor times. It was not possible to observe an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. In addition, inspectors took account of nine responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no additional comments made by parents online. Inspectors took account of a letter given to them during the inspection.
- Inspectors also took account of 20 written submissions made by school staff. The voluntary staff survey was not accessible to staff during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- Inspectors examined the quality of the information provided by the school and the school’s website.

Inspection team

Abigail Birch, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hogarth	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Morrison	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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