

Inspection of Fort Pitt Grammar School

Fort Pitt Hill, Chatham, Kent ME4 6TJ

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

Ofsted has not previously inspected Fort Pitt Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Fort Pitt Grammar School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fort Pitt Grammar School is a remarkable place to learn. It is inclusive, friendly and welcoming. It is also immensely ambitious. Pupils love coming to school and their attendance is extremely high. The school's values of 'aspirational, resilient, collaborative, respectful and successful' pervade all aspects of school life. Pupils demonstrate high levels of responsibility and independence.

A caring and supportive ethos permeates the school. Relationships are exceptionally strong between pupils and staff. Pupils behave extremely well. They are polite, articulate and considerate. They respect each other's differences and celebrate the school's diverse community. Bullying hardly ever happens and is swiftly dealt with if it does.

Pupils participate in an extensive range of sporting, musical and other cultural opportunities. Many are led by students in the sixth form, which helps to develop their leadership skills. Students and pupils were particularly proud of their successes in recent chemistry and physics 'Olympiad' science competitions run by top-class universities. The numerous opportunities on offer enrich and enhance pupils' learning.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of experience that their child receives. One parent's comments, echoed by many, said, 'The school is a vibrant, happy and safe environment for my child; she thrives there.'

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

Leaders and staff nurture pupils' aspirations and self-belief. The well-established curriculum inspires pupils and students. Pupils know that staff want them to excel, and they thrive on rising to that challenge. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, achieve as strongly as their peers.

Subject leaders have ambitious, well-designed curriculum plans in place for all subjects, across all year groups. Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge they want pupils to learn and arranged it in the most useful order, so pupils gain firm foundations for future learning. Teachers use their exceptionally strong subject knowledge to plan sequences of lessons that build pupils' understanding and skills over time.

Leaders have considered clearly how pupils can confidently remember what they have learned. Pupils have frequent opportunities to revisit previously taught content. Well-chosen learning activities are used skilfully to inspire and engage pupils. Activities often take pupils' learning beyond what is expected for their age. Pupils with SEND have their needs accurately identified in detailed individual support plans. Teachers use this information to make effective adaptations to their lessons or to provide other appropriate support.

Pupils value learning and take deep pride in their work. They work extremely hard and are keen to develop and deepen their understanding and skills. Students in the sixth form enjoy the challenge of their A-level learning. The quality of discussion and debate in sixth-form lessons is exceptional. Students are mature and articulate. They talk with remarkable confidence and insight about their learning.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is exemplary. Leaders have woven this through assemblies, tutor time and extra-curricular activities, as well as lessons. The personal, social and health education curriculum expertly builds pupils' knowledge and understanding. The sensitive way that topics are discussed builds further pupils' self-confidence. Pupils show respect to each other and their teachers. They speak positively about the care and support that they are given. For example, the new well-being hub has been well received because it offers pupils an additional layer of support. Leaders have particularly ensured that disadvantaged pupils are enabled to access the range of wider opportunities available. Importantly, they receive excellent pastoral support and care.

Reading has central importance throughout the school, including in the sixth form. Leaders nurture a culture of reading for pleasure, for example through proudly celebrating world book day. They make sure that younger pupils are introduced to a wide range of engaging books which cover diverse cultures and experiences. Students in the sixth form read widely to enhance their A-level courses.

Pupils receive detailed and appropriate advice on their next steps and future careers. A well-planned careers programme ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and life after school. Students in the sixth form receive excellent advice and guidance for university applications and about apprenticeship and employment opportunities.

Staff are rightly proud to work at this school. Leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff value the excellent training that they receive. This professional development has a real positive impact on the high quality of education at the school.

Leadership is strong at all levels. Staff universally buy into leaders' vision. Governors know the school very well and share leaders' ambitions for the pupils. The regular checks that governors carry out keep them informed about the effectiveness of leaders' work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a thorough knowledge and understanding of how to keep pupils safe. The right checks are completed on staff before they start work at the school. Staff and governors receive regular and rigorous safeguarding training. Procedures to

report concerns are clear and well used. Prompt and appropriate action is taken if concerns are raised.

Staff teach pupils how to keep safe both when out in the community and when online. Pupils know who to speak to if they have concerns. They trust staff to respond sensitively and appropriately.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	136337
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10242458
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	896
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	185
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Veen Rama
Headteacher	Nicky Archer
Website	www.fortpitt.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Fort Pitt Grammar School opened as an academy in 2010 as part of the Beyond Schools Trust.
- The school uses one alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, many teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with governors and the chief executive officer of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, art, French and history. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to teachers. They looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work. They met with pupils to discuss their learning.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. In those lessons, they checked pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning.
- The lead inspector scrutinised safeguarding arrangements, including the school's central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors spoke to a variety of staff to check how well safeguarding referrals and systems work.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school site during lunchtimes and at breaktimes.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and groups of staff to hear their views. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff informally around the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils and Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ann Fearon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Carlyle	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector
David Cousins	Ofsted Inspector

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