



# Chatham Grammar School for Boys

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118797  
**Local Authority** Medway  
**Inspection number** 291259  
**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Chisnall HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)	<b>School address</b>	Holcombe
<b>School category</b>	Community		Maidstone Road
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		Chatham ME4 6JB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys	<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 830083
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1080	<b>Fax number</b>	01634 826230
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	430		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	S Radlett
		<b>Headteacher</b>	L D Marshall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–19	6–7 December 2006	291259

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Chatham Grammar School for Boys is average in size and admits girls to its large sixth form. When pupils join the school, their attainment is well above average although the range in attainment is much wider than that found in grammar schools nationally. Very few have learning difficulties or disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are from a White British heritage. A small number speak English as an additional language but none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school has a specialism in languages and is a designated training school for initial teacher training.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school is effective in providing a good education for its pupils. The factors that contribute to this are varied, not least of which is the very good leadership of the headteacher and senior managers. They are successfully enabling all staff to focus on raising pupils' achievements still further. The accelerated learning programme enables pupils in Key Stage 3 to reach very high standards in Year 8 and to embark on a GCSE programme a year earlier than normal. This good progress continues and pupils' achievements in Key Stage 4 are also good. Although no groups of pupils underachieve, standards and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough.

The enriched curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 is a major factor in helping pupils to achieve well. The languages specialism has enabled pupils to learn at least one modern foreign language up to Year 12. The many visits and trips to places locally, nationally and abroad add a dimension to learning and cultural development that is first-rate. The opportunities provided in sport, music, drama and other areas of learning help pupils to develop special interests and talents that contribute to their development as well-rounded young citizens. 'I am very glad that my son attends this warm, caring school', was written by one parent.

The school accurately identifies its strengths and the areas in which it can do better. This is because there are good systems in place to check how well it is providing for pupils, such as the analysis of test and examination results. Teaching and learning are good overall in Key Stages 3 and 4. However, this is not yet entirely consistent and there is a minority of teaching that is only satisfactory. The lesson observations that managers undertake are not sharply focused enough on subject elements of pupils' and students' learning. Nevertheless, planning for improvement is good and the school works well with other organisations, such as local business partnerships, to enhance provision.

Underpinning all of this is the effective learning atmosphere in the school. Pupils and students are ready and eager to learn. They attend well and work hard in their lessons. Their behaviour is good and they enjoy their education. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education and the world of work and make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community.

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and success. Accommodation remains a problem and, although improved, has a negative impact on such areas as drama, music and physical education. The work of the governing body is excellent because of its high levels of challenge to the school and in the way it holds it to account. Overall, the capacity to improve further is good.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form admits students both from the main school and also from a range of other schools. The overall attainment on entry is lower than in many other grammar school sixth forms. Students reach average standards at both AS and A2 levels, making steady progress and achieving satisfactorily.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with much that is good. Students appreciate the good quality of marking and feedback from teachers on what they need to do to improve. Activities in lessons are not always well enough adapted to meet the wide range of learning needs among students.

Students have a good choice of subjects and also benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities which are established in the school. They receive good support with making university entrance applications and good links are made with the world of work to help inform their choices. Those who join the sixth form from other schools are inducted well and soon feel very much part of the community; as one parent commented on her daughter's experience, 'She was fully supported, grew as a person and gained confidence.'

Good leadership and management have led to a significant expansion of the sixth form in the last few years. An ambitious whole-school curriculum development plan has laid firm foundations for a more flexible and responsive sixth form curriculum. In spite of pressure on accommodation, students have very good attitudes to their learning and work hard.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the rate at which pupils learn in ICT so that they reach much higher standards.
- Raise sixth form achievement through helping students, especially those with lower prior attainment, to learn more effectively.
- Ensure that all teaching matches the level of the best in the school by giving teachers clear guidance on how pupils and students best learn subject skills.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

When pupils enter the school the attainment of the majority is well above average but the range of attainment is wide, including a significant minority with average standards. They make good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 and reach standards that are high, and exceptionally so in Key Stage 3.

Overall, pupils in the main school achieve well for their abilities. The school has quite rightly recognised that not enough of the most able pupils have been gaining the highest GCSE grades. Rigorous action taken during last year has resulted in greater

numbers gaining A\* and A grades, particularly in the sciences, physical education and humanities subjects. Standards in ICT are not high enough and pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable, although results are improving.

Standards in the sixth form are around average. Given their starting points, students make satisfactory progress and achieve their target grades. Students achieve particularly well in some areas, for example, in media studies and the certificate in financial studies. They achieve less well in subjects such as ICT, general studies and politics. While overall achievement is satisfactory, students with high levels of prior GCSE attainment achieve well but those with lower levels do not always make the progress expected of them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Pupils' and students' personal development and well-being are good and they are developing well as confident young citizens. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is because they have many opportunities in lessons and in the wider life of the school to take responsibility, work in teams and to experience what it means to be a 'global citizen'. The several charitable activities and numerous opportunities to visit places of interest at home and abroad really add to their cultural and moral awareness.

Pupils' and students' attitudes towards school are good and they appreciate the effort and support of the staff. They enjoy school, feel safe and are well cared for and supported by the very accessible pastoral team. Behaviour is mostly good. Attendance in the main school is good. In the sixth form attendance is satisfactory overall but better in Year 12 than in Year 13. Pupils and students have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles because of the very effective personal, social, health and education programme and the opportunities in physical education. Their views and opinions, expressed through the school council, are noted and acted upon. They have many opportunities to develop leadership skills through, for example, acting as prefects and mentors.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school places a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning. While it is good overall, there is some teaching that is only satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand the requirements of public examinations well. In most lessons, lively teaching and good relationships stimulate pupils' and students' interest and motivate them to learn. Work is intellectually rigorous and enjoyable with a good balance between direction by the teacher and active participation by pupils. In the less effective lessons teaching is lacklustre; teachers talk too much and pupils

lose interest because they lack involvement. Nevertheless, pupils value teachers' expositions as they serve to develop understanding. One pupil summed this up well when he said of his teacher, 'She's a good explainer'.

Teachers use questioning very effectively to develop students' understanding and check what they have learned. Most teachers provide constructive written comments which help pupils and students to know how well they are developing subject based skills and how to improve further. This good practice is not yet being shared effectively across all subject areas to raise the quality of teaching and learning still further.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is good with some significant strengths. In the main school the range of subjects is very well matched to pupils' needs, offering, for example, the option of three separate sciences. The modern languages curriculum is strong, with all pupils maintaining at least one language to the age of 16 and also pursuing a business language course in Year 12. The provision of optional languages, such as Japanese, further enriches the curriculum. Another key feature is the accelerated curriculum which is bringing benefits in terms of meeting the needs of very able pupils and enabling them to make rapid progress.

The very good range of extra-curricular activities adds an extra dimension to pupils' and students' experiences. The same is true of the extensive range of trips and visits, to places such as Germany and Japan, which contributes very well to pupils' and students' cultural and moral education. Another major strength is the way in which they learn about the world of work through subjects, and also through practical opportunities to develop enterprise skills. These are made possible by strong links with business organisations.

The school is a lead partner in a local consortium for post-16 provision and is actively seeking to provide its students with a wider range of vocational courses that will meet their needs and aspirations and complement academic provision. This is not yet fully realised.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school has the academic achievement and the welfare of pupils and students at the heart of its work. It provides a supportive and safe environment in which they feel secure and valued.

Pupils' and students' academic progress is carefully monitored. This enables staff to set appropriate academic targets and to identify and deal with potential underachievement. As a result, pupils and students make good progress. They are given clear verbal and written guidance about ways to improve. They value the

individual concern and care that staff give them to support their learning. The school's procedures for child protection meet current requirements. Relevant staff have had appropriate, recent training and all staff receive clear guidance on how to deal with any issues that arise. The school has good measures to deal effectively with the few occurrences of bullying.

Good support is provided for pupils and students with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, information from other schools at the points of transfer into Years 7 and 12 is not timely enough to make immediate and appropriate provision for those who are vulnerable.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are good and making a positive difference to the quality of education provided. This is because the very strong leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is successfully putting the achievement of pupils and students at the centre of planning for improvement, without losing a clear focus on their personal development. There is a demonstrable link between effective departmental management and improved results, such as in humanities. The school is working effectively to improve the consistency with which middle managers discharge their responsibilities through high quality training. Despite many departments being effectively led, there is still room for improvement.

There are very effective systems in place for managers at all levels to check how well the school is doing by its pupils and students. These enable them to make well-considered judgements about strengths and weaknesses and to draw up effective plans for improvement. Regular and well organised lesson monitoring identifies how teachers might improve their work. However, this monitoring does not focus consistently enough on how well pupils and students are learning particular subject skills.

The governing body is particularly effective because it has first-class knowledge about the work of the school and challenges it to do better still. It holds the school to account very well and oversees the budget with prudence. The school gives good value for money. While most parents are very supportive of the school and value the education their children receive, a significant number of those responding to the Ofsted questionnaire consider that the school does not listen well enough to their suggestions and that communication with them could be better. The school is undertaking a detailed parental survey in the near future.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to thank you very much for the very warm welcome that you extended to the inspection team and me when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with many of you and are grateful for the way in which you shared your thoughts with us. In return, I want to tell you about the inspection findings.

Yours is a good school and getting better still. There are a number of reasons why this is the case. Your headteacher, senior managers and the governors run the school effectively and have good systems for checking how well you are doing in your studies. Your attendance at school is better than average and you work hard. Most of you behave well and enjoy learning; you are developing very well as citizens of the future and you have good knowledge of the world of work and higher education. You make an excellent contribution to the school community. The accelerated curriculum is very good for you and helps to make the most of your abilities. We also think that the range of opportunities you have, including foreign languages and extra-curricular activities, really adds to your learning.

As a result of all this, you reach high standards in your SATs and GCSE examinations and the progress you make is good. However, there are some areas in which improvements need to be made. We have asked the staff to look at ways in which they can help you to reach higher standards in ICT. Some of you in the sixth form could do better still and staff will be thinking about how they can work with you to accelerate your learning. Most of the teaching you receive is good and your teachers know their subjects well. When managers are visiting lessons, we have suggested that they look more closely at how well you are learning particular subject skills and knowledge so that they can help all teaching to be as good as the best in the school. Perhaps you can share your ideas with staff about what helps you to learn best.

You told us that you are proud to be at Chatham Grammar and are pleased with it, a view shared by most of your parents. We think that your pride is entirely justified. I hope that you continue to do well in your tests and examinations and the team joins me in wishing you well for the future.