

Inspection of Gravesend Grammar School

Church Walk, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2PR

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Malcolm Moaby. This school is part of the Aletheia Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Carey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Till.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's core values of respect, friendship, hard work and exploration underpin its high aspirations for pupils. Pupils feel happy and safe. They know they can seek support from staff if needed. They enjoy learning and value the positive interactions they have with teachers.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement, and pupils regularly rise to meet these. The academic curriculum has breadth, balance and purpose. Lessons are characterised by calm, purposeful engagement. Teachers are passionate about their subjects, and this helps them to inspire pupils to do their best. Pupils embrace learning and enjoy the intellectual challenges presented to them.

The school offers an extensive extra-curricular programme, including rugby, boxing, politics, debating, chess, pottery, netball and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Societies such as the medical and Oxbridge societies support those aspiring to study medicine or attend university. The extra-curricular provision actively encourages participation from disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils champion inclusivity and actively celebrate diversity.

Significant numbers of pupils continue their education into the sixth form and a high proportion of students proceed to universities of their choice successfully. Sixth-form students appreciate the extra time and effort their teachers put into supporting them individually.

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

The school's curriculum is thoughtfully designed and carefully sequenced, so that pupils build knowledge and skills effectively. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Students in the sixth form study a wide range of academic qualifications. The school gives personalised support to prepare students for university. This enables students to choose destinations that are highly aspirational.

Expert teachers deliver lessons skilfully, which supports pupils' learning. Pupils regularly recall and rehearse existing knowledge and skills. This helps them acquire new concepts and develop their understanding of critical facts and ideas. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly, addressing any misconceptions effectively. Sometimes teachers' strategies for deepening learning need finessing, including in the sixth form. This is being addressed through professional development opportunities but is not yet embedded consistently. Pupils, therefore, could make even more progress through the curriculum and achieve more highly.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Skilfully trained staff support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND so they consistently achieve well across the curriculum. Very few pupils struggle to read confidently and fluently. Those who do receive support to help them catch up quickly and keep up. Reading for pleasure

is promoted across the school. Students in the sixth form engage in reading aspirational academic texts to support their learning.

Pupils are highly respectful of each other, courteous and polite. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally positive, which leads to very strong attitudes to learning, particularly in the sixth form. This is also reflected in their excellent attendance at school. The school has well-established routines for managing behaviour, ensuring a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils consistently demonstrate high levels of self-control and actively support each other to behave maturely and responsibly.

The personal development programme is a shining strength of the school. Pupils develop leadership skills and self-confidence through thoughtfully planned character education. The personal, social and health education curriculum is diligently constructed. Skills and knowledge build over time in an age-appropriate and highly structured way. The school provides countless opportunities for students in the sixth form to develop character. Many pupils relish the high-quality opportunities to contribute to the school community. For example, in response to pupil voice, some pupils have designed and delivered lessons to their peers about current issues such as misogyny and feminism.

Throughout the school, the careers programme is highly effective. Pupils receive detailed careers information, education, advice and guidance. Tailored support is prioritised for those who need it. Regular engagement with employers and training providers and opportunities to visit universities raise aspirations. Work experience in Year 10 is well-structured. Pupils secure placements that align well with their interests.

Knowledgeable governors know and understand their responsibilities well. They provide effective oversight of the school. Statutory duties are met, and governors maintain strong links with the school community. However, sometimes the school's own self-evaluation and improvement strategies are not as sharply focused as they could be. The school joined the Aletheia Trust recently, which is already working with the school to further refine systems and processes for evaluation and improvement.

Staff well-being is a priority. Teachers speak highly of the school's collaborative approach whereby planning is shared effectively. Teachers feel well supported in managing workload and know that leaders are attentive to staff's well-being. This contributes to a positive and motivated teaching team. Staff are enormously proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's professional development to refine teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills is not yet embedded consistently. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they could across the curriculum. The school should continue to embed and refine its approaches to improving teaching further to ensure that all pupils achieve highly.
- Some aspects of the school's self-evaluation and improvement strategies could be even sharper. As a result, leaders, including governors, are not always fully clear on the effectiveness of some aspects of the school's work. The trust should continue to work with the school to refine its systems and processes further.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137099
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341683
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,457
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	396
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Till
CEO of the trust	Stephen Carey
Headteacher	Malcolm Moaby
Website	www.gravesendgrammar.com
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Aletheia Academies Trust, which it joined on 1 March 2025.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, design and technology, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They talked to teachers, spoke with pupils and students, and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff, pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding which puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors looked at the policies provided on the school website. They reviewed attendance records, behaviour logs, curriculum documentation and destination statistics. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and students. The lead inspector met representatives of the local governing body and the trust as well as the CEO.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and additional written comments received from parents and carers. They considered the survey returns completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Brake	Ofsted Inspector
Giles Osborne	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Boddington	Ofsted Inspector

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