

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 June 2025

Debra Liddicoat
Headteacher
Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School
Chatham Street
Ramsgate
Kent
CT11 7PS

Dear Mrs Liddicoat

Special measures monitoring inspection of Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 4 and 5 June 2025 on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in March 2024.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, Michelle Payne His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and Clive Dunn HMI and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, trustees and a range of staff, the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also visited lessons, met with staff and pupils, looked at pupils' work and considered a wide range of documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to no longer be judged as requiring special measures.

HMCI is of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the knowledge and expertise of those responsible for governance so that they are better equipped to support and hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the graded inspection, there have been changes to the school's senior team and governing body. The school has also undergone a redundancy process, and some staff are due to leave at the end of this term. The school submitted its Statement of Action to the Department for Education (DfE) in November 2024 and received final confirmation of acceptance on 16 May 2025. In this monitoring visit, inspectors focused on the improvement points set at the graded inspection around safeguarding, leadership, separation by sex, and consultation with parents and carers about the relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum. Inspectors will consider the quality of education in future monitoring inspections.

The school has improved the culture of safeguarding. The arrangements for safeguarding are now effective although there are minor weaknesses that still need to be addressed. Throughout the school, staff have strong knowledge of their responsibilities and the process to take when they have a worry about a child. The school's procedures are followed swiftly, and appropriate action is taken. The attendance of sixth-form students is now routinely logged. Leaders make use of the new system to ensure that they know where students are. This mitigates the risks associated with students moving between the different school sites and therefore reduces the safeguarding risk.

When the inspection team arrived, there were administrative errors in the single central record (SCR) that were resolved during the inspection. The school now has plans to ensure that these errors do not happen again. There were also inconsistencies in the quality of records about actions taken to keep children safe. While the actions were timely and appropriate, they were not always recorded in the way they should have been. The school has already put additional training in place to strengthen this work.

As a single-academy trust, those responsible for governance have been making regular checks on the SCR. Their minutes of meetings routinely confirm that all statutory requirements for the SCR are met. The continued issues with this record demonstrate the weakness of this arrangement. Those performing checks should have the knowledge to be able to do them but currently this is not the case. This, along with other aspects of their work, needs to be addressed urgently so that governors have the knowledge and expertise to fulfil their duties.

Governors have provided support for leaders in terms of changing the organisation of the school. The school intends to move to mixed-sex groupings and has recently embarked on a listening exercise with parents to involve them in this change. However, the school's understanding of their legal position as a mixed-sex school is confused.

Governors rely too much on information given to them by leaders. They do not look outside the school enough to know what standards they want to set for their school. This has prevented them from developing the expertise required to fulfil this role successfully.

The school acted quickly on the issues found with the different content of some subjects for girls and boys. Now, all pupils study the same curriculum, irrespective of sex. Pupils that inspectors spoke to welcome these changes, particularly the changes to girls' physical education. Inspectors found that any differences in education are about class variability and teacher pedagogy. These are aspects that the school is aware of and has already started to address through teacher development and coaching.

The school also acted immediately to consult parents about the content of the RSHE curriculum. This communication has been successful. Aspects of the curriculum have been adapted following discussions with parents. This important learning sits within the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. All pupils are timetabled for PHSE lessons but the arrangements for the sixth-form students' lessons have not been as effective as intended. Some students find the large groups are not conducive to discussion of the topics considered. Others reported that they do not value this aspect of their curriculum. The school has already planned how to change this timetabling approach from September. Lower in the school, pupils have mixed views of their PSHE work. The vast majority engage well and discuss their learning and ideas with sensitivity and insight. A small minority display a more negative perception. Following this inspection, the school plans to explore this and refine their approach accordingly.

Attendance has also improved, particularly for the sixth form. Attendance of sixth-form students has increased by 30% from the time of the graded inspection. This is due to the decisive actions taken by the school. Sixth-form students are expected to be in school all the time and reasons to not attend have been removed. Steps such as providing cover staff when teachers are absent have helped to set the expectations of attendance. The school is now working very effectively with pupils and their families to remove any barriers to attendance. The systematic process that has been created is highly effective.

Staff have benefitted from additional training that has covered a wide range of areas from safeguarding to leadership approaches to teaching and learning techniques. Their well-being is considered, particularly through the recent difficult period of redundancies.

The school has found the external support that was brokered by the DfE to be extremely valuable. Subject and senior leaders have welcomed the opportunity to work with colleagues in other schools and to consider different approaches. The school has not yet extended this support to those responsible for governance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Lucy English
His Majesty's Inspector