

Inspection of Maritime Academy

Chalk Lane, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4YG

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Matt Evans. This school is part of Thinking Schools Academy 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), Stuart Gardner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gerard Newman.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a welcoming and inclusive environment, where 'excellence is a habit'. It exudes a strong sense of community. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. Pupils know that staff want them to be the 'best they can be'. They rise to these high expectations. Pupils feel safe and have trusted adults who help them if they are experiencing difficulties.

Most pupils talk positively about the quality of education they enjoy and the experiences they gain as part of school life. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places conducive to successful learning. Pupils listen carefully to staff and approach their work diligently. Consequently, they learn well.

The school's values of 'strength, pride and unity' underpin all aspects of daily life. Pupils relish the wider opportunities that are available. They are proud to hold a range of leadership roles, such as 'fleet admiral', 'warrant officer' or as members of the pupil parliament. 'Community lunch' provides pupils with a platform to debate and discuss current affairs. The school's 'horizons programme' provides an array of interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. For instance, pupils learn embroidery, boxing, cooking, gardening, Japanese and multi-sports. As one pupil said, 'There is something for everyone.'

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

The school, with the support of the trust, has established an inclusive and aspirational ethos. It maintains a sharply focused vision for the academic and broader success of its pupils. The school has designed the curriculum with careful thought and consideration. It has deliberately structured the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn and when. Its ambition continues as pupils move into key stage 4, with high proportions set to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects next year. Pupils look forward to their learning and behave well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified accurately. Information about pupils' needs is shared well with staff, enabling them to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum. Consequently, pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Reading sits at the heart of the school's curriculum. The school ensures that pupils receive exposure to different texts and develop a love of reading. Some pupils need additional support with their reading. The school identifies precisely what kind of additional help these pupils need to become confident, fluent readers.

Staff possess strong subject knowledge. They provide clear explanations to pupils and model learning effectively. Staff actively implement strategies that help pupils retrieve information successfully. Pupils make effective use of their 'individual devices' to do this. However, sometimes, teachers do not check what pupils know and understand carefully

enough before moving on to new learning. When this is the case, gaps in pupils' knowledge and misconceptions are not addressed effectively. As a result, some pupils do not gain knowledge as quickly or securely as they might.

The school takes every opportunity to promote good attendance. It has introduced an extensive range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance. The school is working well to help pupils and their families to overcome any barriers to attending school regularly. Despite this, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. These pupils do not benefit fully from all that the school has to offer.

The school's work on personal development helps build pupils' confidence and prepares them well for their next steps. Pupils receive timely information about careers and future pathways. The school is well poised to expand this area of its work further as pupils move into key stage 4. Pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and viewpoints. They describe in detail their knowledge and appreciation of individual liberty and mutual respect. Pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school provides staff with a variety of professional development opportunities to enhance their expertise while thoughtfully managing workload considerations. Trustees and governors provide timely and supportive challenge to leaders about the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not check what pupils know and understand carefully enough before moving on to new learning. Consequently, some pupils do not gain knowledge as quickly or securely as they might. The trust should make sure that staff check pupils' understanding systematically and adapt their teaching accordingly in response to help pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, do not attend school often enough. As a result, they miss out on essential learning and vital school experiences. The trust should ensure that their ongoing work leads to tangible improvements in pupils' attendance.

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	149075
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10379940
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	585
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gerard Newman
CEO of the trust	Stuart Gardner
Principal	Matt Evans
Website	www.maritimeacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Maritime Academy is part of Thinking Schools Academy Trust.
- The school opened to Year 7 pupils in September 2022. It has taken on a new year group each year. Currently, there are pupils from Year 7 to 9 attending the school. When it is at full capacity, the school will cater for pupils from Year 7 to Year 13.
- The school was in temporary accommodation for the first two years of opening. It moved to the permanent site in September 2024.
- The principal has been in post since the school opened.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- 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 educational 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the principal, other senior and curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and representatives of the interim management board (IMB), including the chair of the IMB. She also met with the regional director and the CEO for the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documents, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also visited lessons from a range of other curriculum subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspection team took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons. They also considered the responses to the confidential pupil survey.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Cattell

His Majesty's Inspector

Julia Mortimore

Ofsted Inspector

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