

Inspection of Manningtree High School

Colchester Road, Lawford, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2BW

Inspection dates:	8 and 14 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Benjamin Briggs. This school is part of Alpha Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gillian Marshall, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Laurence Jones.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have responded positively to the changes recently implemented at Manningtree High School. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), understand the increased aspiration the school now has for them. Pupils have answered this ambition by working hard. Most pupils focus on their learning and produce work that is of high quality. They learn well and achieve highly.

Pupils are safe. They know that adults have their best interests at the forefront of their thinking. Pupils are confident that adults will help them to resolve any problems if they arise.

Most pupils are well behaved. They are polite and engaging. Pupils can see how the increased expectation for their conduct is helping them to learn. The majority of learning takes place without disruption. However, around school, pupils are not always encouraged to move with purpose and with consideration for others.

Pupils enjoy a broad choice of opportunities to develop existing talents or explore new ones. These include sports, performance, and the design and building of racing cars. Pupil leaders are proud of the roles they play in improving the school. They are passionate about the charities they raise funds for and the support they provide to their peers.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Subject experts have identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know. Large, complex topics have been deftly broken down into smaller manageable pieces. The school has then carefully considered the order that pupils need to learn each of these components. This helps pupils use what they already know to secure new learning. Important words and language are skilfully woven into learning. Pupils who struggle with reading are expertly supported to catch up and become fluent. As a result, pupils develop to be highly articulate.

Teachers explain new information clearly. They use the detailed information that is provided about pupils with SEND to adapt their teaching. Checks on pupils' understanding identify any gaps or misconceptions. These are filled and fixed quickly. Learning activities help pupils to secure new learning. Pupils produce written work that explains their thinking and illustrates the depth of their understanding. Pupils with SEND are well supported to produce work of an equally high standard. Pupils apply their knowledge to solve problems with confidence and ease. Consequently, pupils' learning is secure, and they make sustained progress through the curriculum.

The majority of pupils are well behaved and engage positively in learning. When learning is disrupted, staff generally deal with it consistently and effectively. However, how staff deal with disengaged behaviour or learning avoidance is not as consistent. This means that some pupils are allowed to become passive in class. They do not contribute as much

as they could. Some are allowed to leave classrooms and miss out on important information. Here, learning is not as secure.

The school has a well-designed personal, social, health education programme. Pupils learn about key topics such as tolerance and democracy. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about faiths and cultures different to their own. This helps pupils to develop a respectful understanding for others. The careers education programme is equally well considered. Pupils learn about how different subjects open the door to different careers, including global opportunities. Pupils access information about different qualifications from a range of external providers. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps. As a result, the number of pupils who successfully remain in education, employment or training beyond school is high.

Trustees have a deep understanding of the school. They share the school's vision and determination to support every pupil to achieve their goals. They hold school leaders to account robustly. Most staff are supportive of the changes that have been made. They are proud to work at the school. The majority of staff feel that the school considers their workload and well-being carefully when introducing new ideas or strategies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff apply the school's agreed policies and protocols to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, some pupils are allowed to be passive in their learning. A small number are allowed to leave classrooms and move around the school unchallenged. The school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise to consistently apply the agreed strategies to ensure positive behaviour across the school at all times.

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	137945
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10290704
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	919
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurence Jones
CEO of the trust	Gillian Marshall
Headteacher	Benjamin Briggs
Website	www.manningtreehigh.com
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Alpha Trust. It joined the trust in September 2019.
- The headteacher took up his position in September 2023.
- The school uses four unregistered and one registered provider of 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 and engagement 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.
- The inspection started on 7 January 2025. It was paused in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy. Inspectors returned on 14 January 2025 to complete the inspection.
- 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 meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing committee, including the chairs and the chief executive officer (CEO).
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors looked at the school's approach to reading and reviewed documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments submitted. They considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and pupils. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Sharon Pritchard	Ofsted Inspector
Aimee Bray	Ofsted Inspector
Rowena Simmons	Ofsted Inspector
Carol Dallas	Ofsted Inspector

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