

# Hillview School for Girls

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118922
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358474
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacqueline White HMI

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1310
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	297
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jacky Webb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Bovey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Brionne Gardens Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2HE
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 November 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	358474

**Number of children on roll in the registered  
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered  
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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**Age group** 11–18

**Inspection dates** 10–11 November 2010

**Inspection number** 358474

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Most of the time was spent looking at learning, including observation of 36 lessons and 31 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, the senior and middle leadership team and groups of students. They looked at the school's data on students' performance, records of the support provided to them and their progress. The inspection team received and analysed 120 parental and carers' questionnaires, 190 responses to the survey of students and 35 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's improvement plans, policies and procedures, including health and safety and risk assessments.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Is the quality of teaching sufficiently consistent to eradicate variation in students' progress across subjects?
- Are school systems effective in identifying and tackling any underachievement in subjects and student groupings?
- Are leaders and managers at all levels demonstrating good capacity for sustained improvement?

## Information about the school

Hillview School for Girls is a larger than average performing arts specialist school serving an area that contains some selective schools. Since September 2006 it has collaborated with neighbouring schools for sixth form provision. The school holds Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools Status, Clean Food Award, Investor in Careers Award and the International School Award. In addition, it has achieved Investor in People status. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is just below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average but increasing.

Littleview Nursery, situated in the grounds of the school, is managed by the governing body. It is registered to provide childcare for 26 children from six months to under five years of age. Littleview is a workplace nursery primarily providing care and education for the children of teachers and support staff. Most of the children attend part-time.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school of which most students, parents and members of the community are justifiably proud. As one parent said, reflecting the views of many others, 'The decision to send our daughter to Hillview has simply been the best decision we have made for her education and overall preparation for adult life.' The headteacher's high expectations and belief that all children can succeed permeate the ethos of the school and underpin clear priorities that put the needs of students at the heart of everything. Together, the governing body and senior leaders have generated a strong, shared commitment to continuous improvement and established robust and accurate procedures to evaluate the quality of provision and outcomes for students.

Achievement overall has risen and the quality of leadership and management has improved since the school was last inspected. Students make good progress and by the end of Year 11 attainment is high. In the sixth form, most students make good progress in relation to their prior GCSE results. Attainment at the end of Year 13 is generally above average.

Students say they feel very safe in school. They know what constitutes risk, including that encountered on the internet, and how to protect themselves and others. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and well, eat healthily and take full advantage of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are good opportunities for students to undertake responsibilities in school and the local community; many willingly get involved. Their fund raising for disadvantaged people in this country and abroad is extensive. Students' behaviour is outstanding; they are highly supportive of each other and keen to learn. This is reflected in their good attendance. Students receive thorough preparation for the next stage in their lives through the qualifications they achieve, their generally good basic skills and their impressive personal qualities.

Overall, teaching is good. Leaders and managers have a detailed grasp of the strengths and weaknesses and are working systematically to develop the quality further. Their effectiveness is evident in the increasing proportion of outstanding practice. The development of students as independent learners defines the difference between good and outstanding teaching. A number of measures to improve assessment practice have been introduced and are proving to be successful. Students have good opportunities to evaluate their own and others' work and receive helpful verbal feedback from teachers. However, there is some variation in the quality of teachers' marking with exemplary practice not yet fully shared. In a few lessons some of the highest attaining students are not always sufficiently challenged. The curriculum is outstanding because it is structured to meet the needs of all. The school's status for performing arts makes an exceptional contribution to the improvement in students' learning skills and the rising trend in attainment. Staff and students work very well together to create a highly supportive

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learning community. In this climate, students' social skills, and moral, cultural and spiritual understanding develop very well. Care, guidance and support are outstanding, allowing all, including potentially vulnerable students, to make good progress and develop in confidence and maturity.

The school's record of rising standards, particularly the recent impressive rise in attainment in English and mathematics, points strongly towards an outstanding capacity to sustain improvements in the future. The school gives excellent value for money.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to that of the very best by:
  - ensuring that learning activities offer sufficient challenge to the most able ♦
  - sharing the exemplary marking practice to improve consistency in the quality of marking overall
  - continuing to develop students' learning skills to support their independence and capacity to apply learning in different contexts. ♦

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

The school's records and inspection evidence show that the school has maintained an upward trend of attainment over recent years. There was a dip in English results in 2009 but the school moved swiftly and very successfully to address the causes. Provisional results in 2010 show a considerable improvement in English results and a rise in students' attainment across core and other subjects. Variation in students' performance has been greatly reduced with challenging targets met or exceeded in almost every subject area. Learning and progress are good for all groups, including those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the few from minority ethnic backgrounds and those eligible for free school meals. Strengthened assessment practice is helping students to develop a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. For example, in one of the lessons observed, students were using examination grade descriptors to identify weaknesses in their written work and set themselves targets for improvement.

Students feel valued as individuals and enjoy their work and the extensive range of enrichment opportunities. They have good opportunities to develop workplace and other skills that support their future economic well-being. The transition rates into post-16 education or into training and employment are high. Students' social skills are highly developed; most are self-reliant and confident young people. They have a good understanding of cultural and religious diversity within different societies, know right from wrong and are aware of the consequences of their actions. They are courteous and welcoming when they meet people for the first time and routinely show consideration for others.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have high expectations and are very committed to students' success. They have good subject knowledge and communicate an enthusiasm for learning. A comment from one student, typical of many others, explained, 'Teachers are excited about their subjects and this helps us to be interested.' A range of teaching strategies and high quality resources are used. Students have excellent access to computers and most use them effectively as a tool to support their learning. For instance, students use software to experiment with different designs in textiles and develop compositions in music. There are some outstanding practitioners who are highly skilled in developing students as independent and self-motivated learners; these skills have not yet been sufficiently shared. There are occasions when learning is too teacher-led with opportunities to increase participation and give students responsibility for learning missed.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed and extremely relevant to students' needs. It offers students a wide choice of academic and vocational pathways, and provides high quality experiences beyond normal lessons. A broad range of visits, clubs and activities are very well attended. The extended Key Stage 4 gives teachers the scope to devise deeper and more varied learning experiences. Highly sensitive care for those students who are potentially vulnerable, and effective support for all, underpin students' strong sense of well-being and belonging. Students make confident and well-informed choices about their future because of the excellent guidance they receive.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly ambitious for students and the school. Partnerships with other agencies and providers are well established and make an excellent contribution to students' outstanding achievement.

Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and multi-layered with middle leaders and governors actively involved alongside senior leaders. Systems for tracking students' progress ensure that any underachievement is identified and tackled through carefully tailored support. Improvement plans are very well focused. A clear vision and overarching strategic objectives give coherence to whole-school and team plans. Systems for performance management are comprehensive and tightly tied to improving outcomes for students. Line management has been strengthened and provides very effective support and challenge. Extensive, well-planned opportunities for professional development are aligned to improvement priorities but also tailored to the needs of individuals.

The governing body is highly effective. Governors know the school very well and are determined to ensure its continuous improvement. They engage with staff, students and parents in gathering first-hand evidence about the effectiveness of the school. They work closely with the talented senior leadership team, provide sharp accountability and are fully involved in shaping the strategic direction of the school. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are robust. Safe working is evident in daily routines.

Equality of opportunity is promoted vigorously and discrimination is not tolerated. The school community is highly cohesive. Quite rightly, the school wants to build on the extensive community links made through its specialism to deepen its impact within the local community and beyond.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children generally enter the Nursery with expected skills and understanding. They make very good progress as a result of the excellent level of individual support they receive from well-qualified and highly trained staff. Provision is good, including that for children aged 0-3 which fulfils all the requirements for registration.

Children are grouped according to age and ability. They are cared for in rooms which are brightly decorated and well ventilated. Children's work is displayed and posters and photographs create an extremely welcoming, child-orientated environment. Learning is thoroughly planned to provide children of all ages with a stimulating range of activities. Children are freely able to help themselves to toys and resources that support the development of their coordination, problem-solving skills and creativity. Their independence and social skills are promoted very well and they are given frequent opportunities to decide for themselves the activities they will pursue. The very young children and babies are also encouraged to explore and make choices for themselves. Communication and language skills are successfully developed through extensive interaction with adults and the close match between activities and the needs of individual children.

Children's safety is promoted and maintained to a high standard. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development takes off because they have excellent adult role models who show them how to behave, stay safe and take care of their surroundings. Physical activity is encouraged. Access between inside and outside has been improved to allow the free flow of play and more structured learning. A separate outside area for the use of the youngest children and babies is being created. Outdoor soft areas and a sensory garden with wildlife and flora are being developed. The potential of these new developments is yet to be fully realised.

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Detailed records of children's progress are shared with parents. The close and productive relationships between staff and parents promote children's development and enhance their enjoyment. The leadership and management of the Nursery are outstanding. Children and babies thrive because the Nursery manager has a deep and informed understanding of how they develop and of the kind of experiences and care that foster their well-being and happiness.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Sixth form

Outstanding care, guidance and support underpin students' good academic progress. An effective induction programme helps all students settle to sixth form life quickly. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, enthusiasm and encouragement ensure that retention rates are good and improving. Students' progress is monitored carefully and includes regular 'learning conversations' with teachers. There is some variation in performance across subjects but this is diminishing. The very thorough, individualised preparation for higher education, training and employment is described by students as 'amazing'. Those wanting to go on to university are highly successful in securing places.

Students are very good role models. They undertake a range of responsibilities in school and in the local community. Their charitable work extends nationally and internationally. Many train as mentors. They work with younger students and make an invaluable contribution to raising their aspirations.

The curriculum is outstanding with a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Enrichment opportunities are integral to provision and contribute to students' very good personal development. Students are involved in curriculum review; their opinions are valued and have been influential in shaping developments.

Leadership and management are excellent. The head of the sixth form is strongly focused on the success of every student and raising attainment further. Although relatively new to the post, she has transformed assessment practice and further strengthened induction arrangements. She rightly identifies the development of students' independence in learning as an area for improvement.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

## Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires and this is a lower than average return rate when compared with other schools. Parents and carers are supportive of the school and expressed appreciation of the work of teachers and teaching assistants in providing for students' well-being and their academic development. A few of the small number of returns expressed concerns about communications with the school and students' behaviour. Inspectors found students' behaviour to be excellent in lessons and around the school. There was also extensive evidence of the school's efforts to keep parents and carers well informed about their children's progress.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Hillview School for Girls to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 118 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,310 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	58	43	36	5	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	62	52	54	45	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	44	56	47	7	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	43	55	46	5	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	38	62	52	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	30	64	53	9	8	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	29	70	58	8	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	37	65	54	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	42	56	47	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	33	59	49	10	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	29	57	48	8	7	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	64	53	46	38	4	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	56	41	34	7	6	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



12 November 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Hillview School for Girls, Tonbridge TN9 2HE**

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school. We had an interesting two days with you and were impressed by your courtesy, good humour, willingness to talk openly about your work and your pride in your school.

We found your school to be providing you with an excellent standard of education. Examination results in the main school are high and students' levels of achievement are outstanding. Sixth form results are generally above average and students achieve well. All who work in the school put your welfare and progress first and go to great lengths to make school an interesting and vibrant place to be. The care, support and guidance you receive are of extremely high quality. You told us how very helpful staff are and that you feel safe and valued as individuals.

Teaching overall is good and at times outstanding. There are always areas that could be better. We have asked teachers to ensure that learning activities provide all of you with sufficient challenge, that marking is of a consistently high standard and lessons develop your learning skills and independence.

The outstanding curriculum allows you to pursue your own interests and gives you the qualifications you need to realise your ambitions. You clearly enjoy the wide range of activities available to you. We found your behaviour to be excellent in lessons and around the school.

Thank you for contributing so well to the inspection. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline White

Her Majesty's Inspector

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