

# Tanbridge House School

Farthings Hill, Guildford Road, Horsham, RH121SR

**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher is determined in his drive to ensure that all students succeed. He sets very high standards for all members of the school community and does not settle for anything but the best.
- Leaders at all levels are passionate about their roles and are inspirational in their commitment to improve all aspects of the school's work.
- GCSE results have gone up every year since the previous inspection; they are now well above average. This is mainly due to senior leaders', managers' and the governing body's attention to detail and their consistent focus on improving teaching and giving students the confidence to achieve highly.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan interesting and enjoyable lessons extremely well. Lessons motivate and engage all students.
- Teachers know students' abilities well and carefully adapt work so that all of them make the best possible progress.
- Students' positive relationships with one another and staff generate excellent learning. Students learn enthusiastically.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding and they feel extremely safe. It reflects their understanding and appreciation of the school's promotion of rights, respect and responsibilities.
- Tanbridge House is a vibrant and thriving school at the centre of the local community.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 42 half lessons (some with members of the senior leadership team). They attended a breakfast meeting held with local businesses and community groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, many members of the senior leadership team, some heads of department and heads of year, the Chair, Vice-chair and one other member of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and several groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a wide range of documents, including ones related to attendance, safeguarding, behaviour incidents, improvement plans, lesson observations, monitoring procedures and data on standards and progress.
- Inspectors took into account 243 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 75 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Christine Mayle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Allan Barfoot	Additional Inspector
Clare Gillies	Additional Inspector
Heather Leatt	Additional Inspector
Niel McLeod	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Tanbridge House School is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The school has specialisms in science, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school has been awarded the status of a UNICEF level 1 Rights Respecting School.
- Almost all students speak English as their first language. There are very few students from a minority ethnic heritage.
- A below-average proportion of students are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the school receives additional money known as 'pupil premium'.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The most common needs relate to specific learning or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication needs.
- The school uses off-site provision for a few students at local colleges, including Brinsbury College and Central Sussex College. There is also provision on-site for hair and beauty and construction courses in a building known as 'The Lodge'.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Make learning even better by giving students time in lessons to read and respond to the comments that teachers write on their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- The school has maintained high standards for many years. Results rose by a considerable margin in 2012. Almost four out of five students attained five GCSE A\*-C grades including English and mathematics. The percentage of students attaining the EBacc also rose to well above average in 2012; students achieve very well in modern foreign languages.
- Senior and middle leaders check closely the variations in attainment and progress, and act promptly to address any issues. For example, the school plans well-judged extra support for students who are eligible for pupil premium funding. This support has effectively reduced the gap between these students' average points score and others' so that it is much smaller than that seen nationally.
- Students' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, is outstanding. This is because, in all years, leaders have targeted support and resources for students who need it, so that they catch up quickly and then work successfully alongside others.
- In all the specialist subjects of science, mathematics and ICT, students attain high standards and achieve well in all the courses. They do equally well in vocational courses such as leisure and tourism.
- Outstanding teaching and students' enthusiasm for learning contribute exceptionally well to their outstanding progress. The high quality and consistency of teaching means that there is now very little difference in the progress made by different groups of students. Previously identified gaps in achievement between girls and boys are closing rapidly, though girls still do better than boys in most subjects.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. Teachers and support staff prepare work for them which is pitched at the right level and the extra help students receive makes a big difference.
- In all subjects, teachers are aware of the need to develop students' reading, writing and speaking so they plan effectively for students to use these skills in lessons. Well-considered and effective reading support, for those who need it, starts early in Year 7. As a consequence, most students read and write well and speak very confidently.
- Students have an exceptional knowledge and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, reflected in the school's UNICEF award. Their awareness of moral and cultural issues related to this convention is promoted through faith, philosophy and thinking lessons, the personal, social and health programme, and assemblies. Students know that with rights, come responsibilities and respect.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- The school's records indicate that teaching is rarely less than good and often outstanding. This was confirmed during the inspection, where the teaching observed was consistently effective in promoting students' keen interest and engagement.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all students. Students respond well to the work set and make excellent contributions to their own and each other's learning. In a supportive and stimulating environment, they respond enthusiastically to opportunities to work in pairs and groups or independently. Teachers stand back and let students get on by themselves, only intervening when necessary; this is very effective practice. In a Year 8 art lesson, students engaged in role play on how Picasso might try to persuade a curator to exhibit his art. They used very sophisticated language in their arguments while extending their understanding of Cubism.
- Disabled students and those who need extra help receive high-quality support. Teachers and additional adults work together effectively, have high expectations of these students' progress and continually strive to help them to reach the highest standards.

- Warm, constructive relationships pervade classrooms and the school as a whole. Disruption to learning of any kind is virtually unknown. Students respect each other and the adults they work with.
- Planning by teachers is detailed and pitched to meet students' needs. This contributes to excellent learning and progress for all students.
- Marking is good in many subjects. Teachers' written comments on students' work have significantly improved and now contribute to the progress they make. Students value this kind of feedback greatly but they are rarely given time to reflect and respond to the teachers' comments, as was seen in the most effective lessons in a few subjects. Students know their targets for each subject and are able to talk about aspects of their work or the skills they need to develop in order to meet or exceed them.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They arrive on time to lessons, attend regularly, follow expected routines naturally and make excellent contributions to their own learning. This is also reflected in their movement around the school. They move around the school sensibly and behave responsibly and with respect to others throughout the school day.
- Parents and carers, staff and students are very positive about behaviour. Students report that racist incidents or bullying of any kind are very rare and that the latter is dealt with promptly and sensitively if it does occur. Students know about the different types of bullying, for example cyber or homophobic bullying, and they are aware of the importance of understanding different faiths and lifestyles.
- Students' awareness of personal safety is raised through specific lessons and many subjects. For example, in a Year 10 personal, social and health education lesson, students discussed current national issues related to knife crime with a local police officer. Students were attentive and contributed maturely to the debate.
- Students and parents and carers correctly report that the school is a very safe place. Students appreciate the high-quality academic and pastoral support they receive from heads of year and many other staff. One student said: 'It (Tanbridge House) is an unforgettable experience and I don't want to leave.'

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher provides strong and uncompromising leadership. He leads by example and has a high profile around the school. He is well supported by an outstanding senior leadership team which shares a passion to achieve the best for all students. The drive for improvement is evident in all aspects of school life and especially in the ongoing increase in the attainment and progress of students.
- Through well-developed systems and processes, leaders check and evaluate the school's performance. These are clearly linked to the targets set for teachers and to their pay and performance.
- Comprehensive checks on students' progress, through analysing test information, allow all teachers and support staff to keep a close eye on how each student is progressing. Actions are then planned to give additional support to students who need it.
- Groups at risk of underachieving have exceptionally well-planned support to meet their individual needs. For example, Year 7 students with low reading ages receive the right support they need, often through targeted phonics teaching about the sounds letters make.
- Teachers and other staff comment positively about the opportunities they have to develop their skills at all levels. Professional training is matched very closely to their needs. The impact of this focused approach to training is reflected in the high quality of teaching and adult support

observed in lessons. Staff morale is extremely high.

- There is a wide range of subjects and courses on offer as well as an exceptional number of extra activities, for example in music and sports. A few students take GCSE mathematics early. They follow a well-planned programme matched to their needs and achieve as well as if they had taken the examination later. They make rapid progress.
  - An outstanding range of opportunities, both in lessons and through extra-curricular activities, support students' spiritual, cultural, social and moral development. Last year, students raised £100,000 for different charities with each tutor group nominating their own charity.
  - Pupil premium funding is used very well to provide resources to meet individual students' needs as well as additional sessions and adult support. For example, it funds gymnastic lessons, laptops for homework, after-school mathematics, ICT and science sessions, and books for reading programmes. These have all contributed to the marked improvement in students' progress over time.
  - Alternative provision is well organised. It gives a few students practical, work-related courses both on- and off-site. Leaders monitor the progress of these students as carefully as they do other students'. These students make progress in line with their peers.
  - The school has very strong links with local businesses and organises termly meetings to discuss projects that they can work together on for the benefit of students and the local community.
  - The local authority provides expertise to support the school's improvements, in particular within mathematics and in analysing data.
  - The responses from parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about their children's experiences at school. Staff responses were equally positive. One member of staff wrote: 'I have never worked in such a positive and all-inclusive environment as that found at Tanbridge.'
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Members of the governing body were not involved enough in the past but they now know the school very well and are fully aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. They offer total support to the headteacher, leaders and staff while demanding the very best from them. They have a firm grasp of the quality of teaching and performance management arrangements, linking to teachers' pay and progression. They have a particularly effective structure, including a group that determines policies and how sub-committees should function. Governors bring a wealth of experiences from outside education, such as in finance and law, to their deliberations, and, as well as attending training, use these to contribute to the effective leadership of the school. Governors keep a sharp eye on the school's finances which are extremely well managed. They are fully involved in the allocation of the pupil premium, and monitor how it is spent and its impact on students' achievement. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126064
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	403593

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,268
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Dulieu
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jules White
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21–22 November 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 263628
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