

Pate's Grammar School

Princess Elizabeth Way, Cheltenham, GL51 0HG

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- Students' achievement is outstanding. They make exceptional progress during their time at the school in all subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. This results in students making exceptional progress in lessons, including in the sixth form.
- The leadership and management of the academy, at all levels, are outstanding. The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all students. Leaders at all levels share a commitment to outstanding outcomes for all students, including those with special educational needs.
- The governing body is highly effective. It is engaged in all aspects of the life of the academy. Governors hold the academy to account for standards, progress for all students and their personal development.
- Students' behaviour both in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They show high levels of maturity and are eager to learn.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students achieve exceptionally well in all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half-a-day's notice.
- Inspectors saw 33 lessons, of which six were observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle managers, four governors, a representative from the local authority, and four groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers, including 250 responses on Parent View, student and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mireille Drayton

Additional Inspector

Joseph Skivington

Additional Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Pate's Grammar School is an average-sized secondary school. Students come from over 70 primary schools across the county. Intake is selective and students take an examination for entry.
- The predecessor school converted to academy status in December 2010. The school was judged to be outstanding at its last inspection in February 2009.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is significantly below the national average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and students with a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is significantly below average and the proportion of those with special educational needs supported at school action and school action plus is below average. The proportion of disabled students is below average.
- No students attend alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides training and support for other schools across the county, including Gloucestershire's Virtual School, which provides support for children in care of the local authority. The headteacher works closely with the local primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the outstanding quality of teaching by:
 - continuing the high levels of rigour with which staff analyse the elements which constitute outstanding learning for students, including high-quality questions and providing work that challenges all students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students make exceptional progress in all subjects. Students enter the academy with attainment which is significantly higher than the national average. All students achieve at the highest level in their GCSEs with the majority achieving A* or A grades in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Standards have continued to rise and students from all the different groups currently in the academy are in line to make at least the same rates of progress.
- Students are not entered early for mathematics.
- The small number of students eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs make exceptional progress. This is due to the high levels of care and highly effective support for these students. The pupil premium funding is used to make sure that those students who are eligible for free school meals are able to take part in activities outside the school. These students make similar levels of progress in English and mathematics as all others at the school.
- An exceptional range of additional opportunities enhances students' achievement in lessons. There is dedicated time for students to become engaged in local community projects such as the local housing association, reading in local primary schools and an exceptional programme of charity fund raising, organised by students. Sporting, artistic and dramatic opportunities are outstanding and all students take full advantage of the extended provision. During the inspection, many were involved in a mathematics challenge and an author was in school to work with students. Many of these events are led and managed by students, which enables them to stretch their wings beyond the formal curriculum.
- The academy has high expectations for all students, including those at risk of underachievement. It has ensured that there are many opportunities for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, both within lessons and the wider curriculum. For example, in Year 7 students have an enrichment and skills programme and in Year 8 there is a leadership and community element.
- Students' progress in the sixth form is outstanding. Students have the opportunity to work at high levels of autonomy and extension is provided through the extended project qualification. Through this, students are able to apply and extend their knowledge and understanding in new contexts and to pursue lines of enquiry beyond the examination curriculum. This prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education.
- The overwhelmingly majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their children are making exceptional progress. Discussions with students and evidence from the inspection confirm that students achieve exceptionally well.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- While the students' attainment on entry is significantly higher than national, the quality of teaching ensures that there is significant and appropriate challenge for all students and this has resulted in increased attainment at the highest levels for GCSE and A Level.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and use their knowledge of students to adapt their plans to meet the needs of all learners. For example, this was seen in many lessons such as in music where students were encouraged to reflect on the purpose of the messages in the lyrics. Sensitive questioning ensured that students were expected to explain their reasons. In an English lesson, a marked assignment helped students to analyse high-quality responses. Skilful questioning by the teacher was followed through by students challenging one another to secure understanding. In religious education, students formulated opinions about prayer from different standpoints and this was exceptionally well supported by the teacher's probing questions.
- A key factor in the outstanding practice is the ownership of learning by students. This was seen

in all curriculum areas. For example in a biology lesson, students were completely engrossed in a challenging task of planning an experiment and the teacher skilfully encouraged independent learning and working out of the process. In history, students were expected to make significant intellectual effort to develop the wider context of what they were studying. In this lesson students learned a great deal from one another as well as rising to the teacher's high expectations.

- The quality of questions in most lessons is at a very high level and this is ensuring that all students make exceptional progress. This was seen in science lessons, and in an English lesson students were expected to analyse what makes a good question. As a result they explored the difference between open and closed questions.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is outstanding. There are high levels of engagement, motivation and enjoyment. As a result of the quality of experience, a significant majority of students continue to study the subject at A Level. Interpretation of data in one lesson provided exceptional opportunities to develop understanding of frequency charts. Students were building on prior knowledge, working through misconceptions through the use of different strategies to check interpretations. There was excellent use of modelling and use of technology to secure understanding.
- Teachers provide opportunities for extending their literacy skills, both spoken and written. Students read widely and beyond the curriculum, for example through the extended project.
- The very small minority of lessons that were not outstanding were due to the quality of questions which were sometimes closed and did not open up opportunities for students to talk through their understanding and address misconceptions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' attitudes to learning are exemplary, both in and out of lessons. There is a very positive atmosphere in the school and the quality of relationships is marked by respect and good humour. Interviews with students, teaching and support staff showed that this aspect of the school's life is highly valued.
- Students take great pride in the school. The school sets out to have a relationships rather than a rules-based community. This encourages good behaviour with a clear understanding of right and wrong with a focus on personal responsibility. The pastoral team is alert to potential low motivation and intervenes promptly with appropriate support.
- There are no exclusions and absence is significantly below the national average.
- Students know how to keep safe and are aware of different forms of bullying, especially cyber-bullying. A full programme of e-safety is being rolled out. In discussions with students, they were full of praise for the way the school supports them. They spoke of the mentoring system involving older students which they find particularly supportive.
- Students welcome the opportunities to be involved in wider school life. The school council meets weekly and their ideas, including their views on teaching and learning, are fed into the senior leadership team. As a result, they feel that their views are taken seriously.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that their children are safe and that behaviour is managed effectively.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and his vision and energy are shared with the wider leadership team. He and his colleagues are ensuring that students have exceptional opportunities for high levels of personal as well as academic achievement. As a result of this,

students are thriving, have a real commitment to their local community and are achieving at the highest levels.

- The headteacher is exceptionally well supported by other senior staff and the governing body. He has created the conditions for staff to take on significant additional responsibilities, both within the school and in supporting other schools. The leadership programme is also extended to students who are involved in leading many aspects of school life, including assemblies and charity and community events.
 - The academy's information technology system is highly developed. The monitoring system provides timely and appropriate information about the progress of students. This is used by all staff to identify students' progress and to ensure there is appropriate challenge and support. Information is also shared with parents, carers and students and there is a sophisticated system of feedback to make sure that students know what to do in the next steps in their learning.
 - Structures for developing staff are highly advanced. Designated time is set aside to discuss best practice and to evaluate new ways of working. A number of staff are engaged in high-quality research, focused on the needs of the students. Staff visit other schools to research outstanding practice elsewhere. Colleagues from other schools regularly develop their own practice and systems through working with staff at the academy. The academy provides courses and resources to develop leadership and management in teaching. It provides support to other local schools, including the virtual school for children who are in the care of the local authority.
 - The curriculum meets the needs of all students and is reviewed regularly. There are opportunities for taster sessions through the weekly flexible sessions. The academy pays considerable attention to the wider personal development of students and the range of opportunities beyond the formal curriculum is exceptional. School councils and councils provide opportunities for students to develop clear, personal values and to make an impact on school life. Among many other programmes, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Amnesty International, debating, public speaking and student-led assemblies give students chances to develop leadership skills. As a result, students have highly developed social skills and are able to work to exceptional levels of independence. Students speak very highly of the chances they are given to explore ideas and take part in activities beyond their lessons.
 - The academy provides high-quality opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident in all aspects of school life and is underpinned by planning at all levels. Flexible learning days and events such as 'Spirituality Week' provide opportunities for students to think deeply about new ideas. The student voice is embedded through the school and the Year 8 leadership and community programme establishes a relationship between the local community and students. This is developed as students go through the school, with students leading many events. Students constantly aspire to lead in their chosen field of interest and inspectors observed an outstanding assembly which was led by students.
 - The school's checks of its own performance are accurate and it sets itself ambitious targets to embed and extend its outstanding practice.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective. Governors are very involved in the life of the school and use their wide-ranging skills to provide outstanding support. They have high-quality information about the achievement of students and the quality of teaching. They know the performance of the school compared with other schools nationally and have robust structures in place to ensure that the quality of teaching is linked to salary progression. They know how the additional funding for the pupil premium is spent and evaluate the impact of this on the progress for these students. The governing body carries out robust checks on the effectiveness on its own work and impact. The governing body ensures that all its statutory obligations, including for safeguarding students, are met.
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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

Unique reference number	136353
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	411721

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Grammar
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	999
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Barradell-Black
Headteacher	Russel Ellicott
Date of previous school inspection	February 2009
Telephone number	01242 523169
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Email address	office@pates.gloucs.sch.uk

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