

Grey Court School

Ham Street, Ham, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7HN

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- All leaders, including governors, have the highest ambition for all pupils. Only the best will do. Such high expectations have ensured that the school offers an exceptional quality of education.
- The quality of training for teachers and leaders is first class. It fully challenges and supports them to fulfil their potential. As a result, teaching is highly effective across the school.
- Leaders constantly keep the curriculum under review. For example, in offering new courses at key stage 4 that will challenge and inspire pupils. A priority is also placed on helping pupils to manage their emotional well-being. This starts from Year 7. Pupils effectively learn how to become more resilient and to manage any stress or anxiety that they may be feeling.
- Almost all groups of pupils, including the most able, consistently make exceptional progress across the curriculum. For example, by the end of key stage 4, pupils' progress across all subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently significantly above the national average.
- Parents and carers have high levels of confidence in all aspects of the school's work. In the words of one: 'I absolutely know that this school has prepared my children in the best possible way.'
- Pupils make exceptional progress because their teachers challenge them to think deeply about their learning. Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well and carefully select tasks and activities that fully meet their needs.
- Pupils have high expectations of themselves. They fully enjoy learning and they behave very well. Pupils are extremely confident and articulate young people.
- Outcomes in the rapidly growing sixth form are outstanding. Students achieve exceptionally well from their different starting points. They are carefully encouraged and supported in becoming independent young adults. Students were full of confidence in talking about the high-quality teaching and support that they are receiving.
- Pupils thrive at the school. As a result, overall attendance for most groups is high. Although improving, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as high as it is for non-disadvantaged pupils.
- The school ensures that pupils and students are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain and the next steps in their lives.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, know the school exceptionally well. The depth of self-evaluation and careful analysis by all leaders means that nothing goes unnoticed. For example, the systems for checking on pupils' progress and attendance are highly effective. Leaders take quick action when they identify anything that gives them concern.
- High ambition and a belief that only the best will do flows through Grey Court. Leaders continually want to achieve even more for pupils. They fully ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. For example, leaders carefully use pupil premium funding. They select and fully evaluate the impact of their chosen activities. They know what works well and what does not. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is either in line with or significantly above that of other pupils nationally.
- The quality of training for staff, including teachers new to the profession, is of the highest quality. Leaders focus on ensuring that staff have the skills and knowledge that they need to do their jobs to the best of their ability. Responses to Ofsted's inspection survey for staff were very positive. For example, in showing that a very high proportion of staff feel well supported and that leaders have created a culture where staff are encouraged to take risks in developing their work.
- Leadership and management of the support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are exceptionally strong. Leaders ensure that staff are fully aware of, and trained so that they can confidently meet, pupils' needs. Overall, pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- The curriculum is designed around the needs of pupils. Leaders have decided pupils will spend three years studying subjects at key stage 3. During this time, pupils study two modern foreign languages from a choice of Mandarin, German, French or Spanish. Art, music and drama are also studied. Before designing the key stage 4 curriculum, leaders issue an annual survey to pupils to check on their aspirations and interests. As a result, leaders have introduced a range of new courses, such as AS level politics, and work-related subjects to best meet pupils' needs. The outcome of leaders' actions in designing the curriculum is that pupils make excellent progress across the full range of subjects that they study.
- Staff support the formal curriculum with a wide range of activities before and after school, and at lunchtime. Pupils also benefit from visits to other countries such as Canada, Spain, Germany and Belgium. Leaders use additional funding to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to take part in trips and visits.
- Leaders at the school effectively share their leadership and teaching expertise with other schools. The headteacher is also a national leader in education. The school also offers teacher training opportunities through its role as a teaching school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has an expert understanding of the school. Governors take every opportunity to inform themselves about the impact of the school's work and to

challenge leaders on what they tell them. They take nothing for granted. For example, governors choose to ask pupils and/or staff to come and speak to them at governing body meetings. The committee structure that the governing body has decided to use means that governors drill down to different aspects of school life, such as evaluating attendance at the student behaviour and safety committee. Governors talk with confidence and clarity about the school's work.

- Governors also use external reports to check on the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. One recent review started with the request 'to be hypercritical'. This is an example of where leaders want to do even more for pupils and to leave no stone unturned in finding ways of making even more of a difference.
- Governors have a detailed understanding about how the school keeps pupil safe. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding jointly worked with the designated safeguarding lead to audit the school's safeguarding. As a result, the governing body has confidence in the schools safeguarding systems and processes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders know their pupils and the risks that they face from living in London. The school carefully evaluates how to help pupils to manage these risks. One example is the design of the personal development and well-being (PDW) programme. Pupils have weekly lessons that include different 'stay safe' topics. PDW is carefully planned so that pupils learn about topics such as drug and alcohol misuse, knife crime and radicalisation in an age-appropriate way. As a result, pupils of different ages speak confidently about how to stay safe, including when online.
- Staff are well trained on all aspects of safeguarding, including radicalisation and female genital mutilation. When asked about the impact of their training, staff speak about being more aware of what to look out for in relation to any changes in the behaviour and attitudes of their pupils. Staff report any worries or concerns to the designated safeguarding lead quickly. Leaders keep careful records of any safeguarding concerns, taking quick and effective action.
- The school works well with different external agencies. It also has its own counsellors and a family support worker. All these resources combine to help support pupils and their families. Pupils say that there are adults that they can turn to when needed. The majority of parents who replied to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, strongly agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is excellent across the school. This is because teachers are experts in their subjects. They explain their subject content well and encourage pupils to think hard and deeply about what they are learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and all of their pupils. They set high standards. They expect their pupils to work hard, both in lessons and at home.
- Teachers are highly skilled in checking that their pupils understand what they are learning. Their regular questioning and ongoing assessment of work helps them check

and correct any misconceptions that pupils may have.

- The skilful and probing questioning used by teachers ensures that pupils develop very strong analytical skills. Teachers make sure that pupils use subject-specific terms in their responses. This helps pupils to speak and write confidently and articulately. They also ask their teachers questions whenever they are unsure about what they are learning.
- Teachers create a happy learning atmosphere in their lessons. They form positive working relationships with pupils and encourage them to give them their best. One pupil said to an inspector: 'The school is like being a bird that pushes their child out of the nest so they learn to fly and achieve.' This chimes with the views of other pupils, including those that replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school places a great deal of importance on helping pupils to manage their emotional and mental well-being. This includes formally through the PDW curriculum. For example, in Year 8, pupils have to undertake eight different challenges to help them to build their resilience. In Year 9, pupils learn strategies to deal with stress and anxiety. Pupils find these useful.
- Adults at the school know their pupils well, including any vulnerabilities or particular welfare needs that any particular pupil may have. Leaders created a team of student support officers (SSOs) to add further day-to-day support for pupils. Pupils speak very highly of the support and encouragement that they receive from staff, including the SSOs.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying was rare at the school. Most said that they were not aware of any bullying but stated that there is 'zero tolerance', and 'it is taken extremely seriously' and would lead to a 'harsh punishment'. Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. The school's work on internet safety emphasises cyber bullying and pupils are fully aware of how to stay safe online.
- Pupils are extremely positive about the school's work in helping them to understand about life after school. Careers advice is extremely well designed and fully supports pupils for their future lives. It starts in Year 7 and increases in depth as pupils move through the school. For example, in Year 8, pupils have to investigate different jobs to help think about and shape their long-term career goals. In Year 9, pupils are able to meet and talk to different employers to help them decide on their optional subjects for Year 10.
- A small group of pupils are being educated in alternative (off-site) provision, either full time or part time. Leaders carefully manage their education. The provision helps pupils, for example, to study particular work-related courses, such as mechanics, or it provides them with the specific behaviour support that they need. Leaders regularly check on attendance and there are clear procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe. All pupils attend well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils typically have exemplary attitudes to learning. They fully engage in activities and are extremely positive about working hard. They enjoy school and their learning. Parents are also very positive about the high standards of behaviour at the school.
- During breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils mix well. A pupil, when talking about how inclusive the school is, commented: 'The school is effective with different cultures, beliefs and attitudes.' Other pupils agreed. Pupils take care of the school environment. For example, they show full respect for facilities and staff when using the canteen.
- Leaders and teachers are strict. They have clear boundaries about what behaviour is not acceptable. Leaders try to avoid having to make a decision to issue a pupil with any form of exclusion but will do so when there is a serious breach of the behaviour policy. However, the proportion of fixed-term exclusions is below the national average. Leaders focus on preventing poor behaviour and encouraging pupils to resolve differences respectfully. For example, the SSOs work effectively with pupils who need support and encouragement in improving their behaviour.
- Attendance is above the national average overall. Leaders, including the family support worker, carefully monitor pupils' attendance. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, although improving, is not as high as it is for non-disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils consistently make progress that is significantly above the national average, including in English and mathematics. For example, for each of the last two years, pupils' progress in every single subject that was part of their overall Progress 8 score was significantly above the national average.
- Attainment at the school is high in all subjects when compared to the national average. For example, in 2017, pupils achieved over one grade higher in both English and mathematics than other pupils nationally.
- One reason why outcomes are outstanding is because teachers know their pupils exceptionally well. They use the information they have about pupils, such as their special educational needs, background and/or ability, to carefully create or select tasks that are well suited to pupils' needs. As a result, all groups of pupils make substantial progress in their studies.
- The most able pupils achieve exceptionally well. This is because teachers know what skills and knowledge pupils need to be able to maximise their potential. They routinely challenge pupils to give their best and to tackle the most demanding activities. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 7 pupils were challenged to look for a pattern and then to use 'their love for algebra' to express the pattern as an equation.
- One of the school's priorities is to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have the same academic success as their non-disadvantaged peers. This is successful. In 2017, provisional information suggests that disadvantaged pupils made progress either in line with or significantly above that of other pupils nationally. Current disadvantaged pupils are making the same, excellent progress as their peers. All teachers, leaders and non-

teaching staff are working to ensure that their actions help pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed.

- Teachers and supporting adults are well trained on meeting the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They typically thrive at the school. Supporting adults question pupils; they do not do the work for them. Working with teachers, they ensure that teaching helps pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils have excellent literacy and numeracy skills. They speak with confidence and are keen to talk about their views on the world around them. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary extremely well in their written and oral work.
- Overall, pupils at the school are exceptionally well prepared for the next steps in their education, employment or training. This is primarily because the school gives pupils the knowledge, skills, confidence and 'know-how' to maximise their own potential.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leadership and management of the sixth form is excellent. The sixth form has gone from strength to strength each year since it opened.
- Students, from their different starting points, make significant progress over the course of their studies. For example, in 2017, provisional information shows that progress on academic courses is significantly above the national average. Subjects whose results were not as strong in 2016 (sociology, computing science and geography) all significantly improved in 2017.
- The characteristics of effective teaching at key stages 3 and 4 shine through in sixth-form teaching too. Sixth-form teachers have an excellent understanding of the examination requirements of their subjects. They focus expertly on helping students to develop their analytical and evaluative skills so that they can attain higher grades.
- Leaders have recently introduced work-related courses to help widen the curriculum for students. Students make substantial progress towards their targets. This is because the courses meet their needs and aspirations. Teachers fully support students in developing their subject skills and understanding.
- Students are fully prepared to become independent and successful young adults. They take their studies extremely seriously. Their attendance is high. Students are well organised and go to their lessons prepared and ready to learn.
- Leaders seek out and develop highly effective partnerships with different universities, colleges, businesses and employers. All of these partnerships combine to give students first-class opportunities to explore and inform their future careers. For example, students from disadvantaged backgrounds have been successful in gaining places at the most prestigious universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. For other students who wish to follow an apprenticeship route after school, they too are fully supported in doing this.
- Students love the sixth form. They speak so highly about their teaching and pastoral support. During a conversation with an inspector, one student commented, 'the opportunities we get are excellent', whereas another added, 'literally anything that happens, they [staff] are there'. These views echoed with other students who spoke to

the inspection team.

- Students have an excellent understanding of what life in modern Britain is about. They talk with confidence about tolerance, respect and diversity. They are, without doubt, excellent role models for pupils in key stages 3 and 4.

School details

Unique reference number	138825
Local authority	Richmond upon Thames
Inspection number	10041949

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,342
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	235
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Frank Kitson
Headteacher	Maggie Bailey
Telephone number	0208 948 1173
Website	www.greycourt.richmond.sch.uk/
Email address	office@greycourt.richmond.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school is a teaching school and the headteacher is a national leader of education. The school formally supports several other schools with their school improvement work.
- The school is one of two schools in the Every Child, Every Day Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The proportion that speak English as an additional language is broadly in line

with the national average.

- A small number of pupils are educated in alternative, off-site provision either on a full-time or part-time basis. This includes Malden Oaks, the local authority pupil unit, Kingston College and Richmond College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the time they leave school.

Information about this inspection

- The section 5 inspection was carried out because the school has added an additional key stage, the sixth form, since the last inspection.
- The inspection team visited a range of classes, some jointly with school leaders. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of pupils' work across the curriculum.
- The inspection team held a range of meetings with senior and middle leaders to evaluate the impact of their work. Inspectors held meetings with governors, teachers new to the profession, and different groups of pupils, including some sixth-form students. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated 81 replies to Ofsted's online inspection survey for staff, 210 replies to the pupil questionnaire and 256 replies to Parent View. Inspectors also evaluated the school's recent survey of 574 parents. The lead inspector evaluated an email received from a parent and an email from the school's community police officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide variety of documentation provided by leaders, including internal assessment information for pupils in all year groups, sixth-form examination results, leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning. They scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour information, a variety of school policies, the single central record of recruitment checks and a wide range of other information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Sam Hailey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Vale	Ofsted Inspector
James Whiting	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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