

# Inspection of Tonbridge Grammar School

Deakin Leas, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2JR

---

Inspection dates: 16–17 October 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

---

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Being a pupil at Tonbridge Grammar School means that teachers expect a lot of you. All staff have very high expectations of pupils. Trying your best and working hard in school is part of everyday life.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They approach their lessons with high levels of maturity. Pupils feel safe and very well supported because of strong relationships between staff and pupils. Bullying is extremely rare. It is dealt with well if it does happen. Pupils know who to go to if they have concerns or worries.

Pupils thrive because they are fully involved in school life. Almost all pupils attend extra-curricular clubs. They really enjoy the academic and social aspects of the clubs they attend. Pupils compete with vigour in the school's sports teams and they heartily support charities. National and international trips extend pupils' learning. For example, pupils visit Malawi to support charities improving education.

Pupils are motivated and interested because their knowledgeable teachers understand their needs and plan very demanding lessons. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy school and achieve exceptionally well.

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

Staff act with a common purpose to provide pupils with the best education possible. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is exceedingly ambitious. They think very carefully about what pupils need to know, remember and understand. Leaders also think about when pupils should learn about different topics within each subject. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils learn about the rules on how to fit words and phrases together before moving onto learning about complicated phrases.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They do their own research into how to help pupils excel. Teachers share their findings with other staff. They plan lessons that enthuse and inspire pupils. As a result, pupils develop a deep understanding of the subjects they study. For example, in history, Year 9 pupils recalled the competition for overseas land between western nations in the nineteenth century. They studied this in Year 8. Pupils used this knowledge to develop their understanding of the causes of the First World War. Teachers astutely understand pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make remarkable progress. This is because of teachers' first-rate support and excellent care.

Pupils study a rich range of subjects in key stage 4. Among other subjects, they study three sciences, a modern foreign language, history and/or geography. Nationally published results show that pupils' progress is well above average by the end of Year 11. Pupils are very well prepared to start key stage 5.

Sixth-form students play a full role in school life. Teachers help students to manage their own time and work independently. Students thrive because teachers plan very demanding lessons. Careers education is an important part of the curriculum. Students learn a lot from past students' visits. They inspire students to consider ambitious next steps. For example, a recent visitor explained her research about DNA to students in a biology lesson. This inspired several students to consider a career in science. Students achieve exceptionally well by the end of Year 13.

Leaders plan a rich range of extra-curricular opportunities. These inspire pupils and stimulate their interests. For example, many pupils attend hockey, rugby, dance, badminton, classics and foreign language film clubs. Pupils are keen to run extra-curricular clubs themselves. They improve their own leadership skills by thinking of ideas for clubs that others would enjoy. Pupils maintain their excellent attitudes in lessons. They make sure that no time is wasted.

Leaders have made sure that personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is expertly planned. Pupils develop their understanding of cultural and social issues very well. They learn about healthy body image, healthy relationships, and managing a budget. PSHE topics link with other subjects so that pupils connect their learning. They have a sophisticated understanding of British values such as tolerance, respect and the rule of law. For example, Year 9 pupils recreated a magistrates court. Pupils enjoyed investigating the legal issues surrounding online abusive behaviour.

Staff feel that leaders support them very well. Leaders are quick to put in place support strategies when staff have issues with workload. Staff are highly skilled because of very effective training. They feel valued and enjoy being part of a very effective team.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are extremely vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are safe. Staff maintain organised and orderly safeguarding records. They work very well with external agencies and act determinedly when pupils require extra help.

Staff are very well aware of the issues that pupils face in the community. Staff adapt the curriculum to ensure that what they know about local risks becomes part of the PSHE curriculum. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe outside of school and online.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136417
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111436
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,182
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	283
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sally Dyson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rosemary Joyce
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tgs.kent.sch.uk">www.tgs.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Tonbridge Grammar School opened as an academy in January 2011.
- Members of the governing body are also members of the board of trustees.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, and governors.
- On the first day of the inspection, inspectors focused their activities on English, science, mathematics, modern foreign languages, design and technology, and history. In each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils,

visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.

- Inspectors considered the views of staff from two meetings with groups of staff.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 357 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Harry Ingham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Norman	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019