

Inspection of Torquay Boys' Grammar School

Shiphay Manor Drive, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 7EL

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Torquay Boys' Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Torquay Boys' Grammar School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened in Torquay Boys' Grammar School's effectiveness before and after it converted to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created an ambitious and purposeful environment. They set high expectations for pupils to achieve well. Pupils and staff are proud to be members of the school community.

Pupils are respectful and polite to staff. Pupils' conduct, at social times and when moving around the school, is orderly. Pupils attend well and they are punctual to lessons. Pupils say that staff take bullying seriously.

Teachers have strong subject expertise that they enjoy sharing with pupils. They know their pupils well. Pupils are keen to participate in philosophical debates, engage in high level discussion and to problem solve.

Leaders have created many opportunities for pupils to find their talents, whether that be taking on roles in the school production, representing their school in sports events or becoming advocates and mentors in the sixth form. Pupils appreciate the detailed advice they receive about how to take their next steps.

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

Leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils' academic success. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They appreciate the ways in which the school helps their child to achieve well. Staff, including early career teachers, feel valued and respected by leaders.

Leaders have constructed a broad and well-balanced curriculum across the school. Curriculum leaders have strong subject knowledge and many use this effectively to construct a well-sequenced subject curriculum. Where this is the case, pupils have a secure understanding of essential subject knowledge. For example, many students in the sixth form have well-developed technical vocabulary and speak confidently about the subject.

In many subjects, teachers check pupils' understanding in a systematic and diagnostic way. Where this is effective, teachers match work to what pupils know and can do. They quickly uncover pupil misconceptions, providing useful feedback that helps pupils to move forward in their learning. However, where this is not routine, work is not well matched to pupils' knowledge. In the sixth form, for example, some students noted that work was not challenging enough for them.

Leaders have introduced strategies to improve pupils' recall of knowledge. Pupils use these well and say they serve as useful prompts. Where this is having an impact, pupils use prior knowledge to deepen their understanding. For example, they build on their knowledge of concepts and theory in philosophy and applied ethics, or they

quickly solve more complex problems in mathematics. However, pupils often require reminders about previous component knowledge in languages and art, and this slows them down.

Younger pupils value the school's reading programme. Staff encourage them to read widely. Pupils enjoy the challenge of the reading programme and appreciate the rewards they can achieve.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides teachers with appropriate information that enables them to tailor their curriculum. Pupils with SEND participate well in extra-curricular activities. They told inspectors that the support they receive enables them to make the most out of their time in school.

Leaders have carefully planned a curriculum to support pupils' personal development. However, although pupils can recall recent content, they do not always recall the important messages imparted. Leaders are keen to seek pupils' views about their experiences at the school. However, a few pupils told inspectors they did not feel their voice was heard.

The school provides effective careers guidance that meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. Pupils find this useful and discuss their future plans knowledgeably. Students in the sixth form say their teachers provide expert support that helps them to make decisions about their next steps.

Governors and trustees work closely with leaders. They share the headteacher's vision for the school and understand their role. However, although governors know the school well, they do not have a sharp enough view of what the school needs to do to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to identify safeguarding concerns. They are confident the safeguarding team will act appropriately. Pupils know who to speak with if they need help. Leaders make sure pupils are aware of safeguarding risks.

The school has identified pupils' mental well-being as a priority area following the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to support pupils. In addition, leaders are working with local organisations to strengthen pupils' understanding of national issues, such as sexual harassment.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not always systematic or diagnostic. This means that work is not consistently well matched to what pupils know and can do. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is used systematically across all subject areas to help pupils to move forward in their learning.
- Leaders have carefully planned a curriculum to support pupils' personal development. However, some pupils do not always recall the important content. Leaders need to ensure the programme is delivered in such a way that pupils recall and apply the important messages imparted.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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

Unique reference number	136321
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10199439
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1093
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	280
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Christine Weston
Headteacher	Pete Lawrence
Website	http://www.tbgs.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Torquay Boys' Grammar School converted to become an academy in November 2010. When its predecessor school, Torquay Boys' Grammar School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of Torquay Boys' Grammar School multi-academy trust which includes one other secondary school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Ofsted has not previously inspected Torquay Boys' Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged the predecessor, Torquay Boys' Grammar School to be outstanding, before it opened as Torquay Boys' Grammar School as a result of conversion to academy status. That 'outstanding' grade reflected Torquay Boys' Grammar School's overall effectiveness in June 2007, under the relevant inspection framework at that time. The judgement of 'good' reflects the overall effectiveness of Torquay Boys' Grammar School under the current inspection framework.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, languages, mathematics, philosophy and applied ethics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo and also spoke with pupils with SEND.

Inspection team

Tracey Reynolds, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jen Gibbs	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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