

Inspection of a good school: Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys

St John's Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9XB

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 November 2021

Outcome

Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this harmonious community. They feel safe and well cared for. Pupils show kindness and respect to one another and have no concerns about bullying. They say that should they have any worries, teachers will listen and deal with their concerns swiftly. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school. One parent echoed the thoughts of many by saying, 'I could not recommend this school more highly, the children are thriving'.

Everyone strives for all-round excellence. Pupils approach all aspects of school life with maturity. They benefit from the many opportunities they have to broaden their horizons and showcase their abilities and talents. Pupils value the 'positive pathways' reward system. They wear the badges they earn with pride. Sixth-form students play an active role. For example, they enjoy leadership responsibilities, such as well-being ambassadors, and run clubs for the younger pupils to enjoy.

Leaders and teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They try hard, think for themselves and enjoy working with others to tackle challenging problems. As a result, pupils love coming to school and achieve well.

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

Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for all staff and pupils. A strong culture of learning and achievement runs through the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Most pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at key stage 4. However, they have a genuine choice from a wide range of options. Many pupils continue their studies in the sixth form where this wide variety continues: 25 A-level courses are available.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is rich and challenging for all. The important knowledge pupils should learn, and the order in which they should learn it, is clearly set out. Many teachers use their expert subject knowledge to spark pupils' curiosity and

deepen their understanding. They skilfully check how well pupils have understood what they have learned before moving them on to more complex concepts. However, the quality of curriculum delivery within a small number of subjects is still variable. Leaders are aware and are taking action to address this.

Across subjects, reading is given a high priority. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to undertake research or read articles that are linked to their learning. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils use this vocabulary with precision to explain their ideas clearly. Leaders are determined that all pupils should regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. They have introduced several strategies to develop this. However, some of these are not yet consistently embedded.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified appropriately. While the school has a low proportion of these pupils, leaders work efficiently with staff to make sure that they have the training and knowledge to support pupils with SEND effectively.

Pupils behave well. They have highly positive attitudes to their learning and work hard. There is a calm and productive atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Consequently, learning is rarely disrupted by low-level behaviour issues.

Leaders provide a wide variety of opportunities for pupils' broader development. Pupils compete in many different sports. They develop their creativity through trips to the theatre and art galleries, and through drama productions. The thoughtful 'all-round excellence' programme enables pupils to learn about the importance of physical and mental well-being. Pupils talk knowledgeably about a number of topics, including those related to diversity and equality. Pupils and students in the sixth form are provided with up-to-date and relevant careers advice. This means they are well informed about the next stage of their education.

Staff morale is high. Leaders and governors do their very best to ensure that all staff feel well supported and valued. Staff appreciate the support leaders offer, including with managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff are vigilant in their care for pupils. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They fully understand what to do if they have a concern over a pupil's safety or well-being. Leaders ensure that concerns are dealt with swiftly and pupils receive the help and support they need. This includes securing assistance from external agencies when required. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They also learn how to form positive and healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are rightly aware that in a very small number of subjects the school's curriculum are not yet implemented securely and consistently. They have begun to address this. This will improve pupils' achievement even more.
- Pupils' love of reading is not yet fully developed across the school. Leaders have identified this issue. They should continue with their strategies they have begun to introduce and ensure these are implemented consistently well across the key stages.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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	118790
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10200499
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Community
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	1504
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phillip Drew
Headteacher	Amanda Simpson
Website	www.twgsb.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and two deputy headteachers have been appointed.
- The school admits girls into its sixth form.
- In September 2021, the school opened a second site in Sevenoaks. There are currently three classes of Year 7 pupils.
- The school is currently using two alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, five governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from Kent local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography and history. 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 a sample of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors considered the 84 responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 455 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the 282 additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons. Inspectors also considered the 746 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.

Inspection team

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