

Inspection of a good school: Rainham School for Girls

Derwent Way, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0BX

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 April 2022

Outcome

Rainham School for Girls continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Rainham School for Girls is a happy school. Pupils speak highly of the relationships between themselves and staff, which are rooted in mutual respect. They acknowledge the support received from the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and are taught to be safe inside and outside school. Bullying is not tolerated. Any bullying that does happen is quickly and effectively dealt with.

The school encourages pupils to celebrate and embrace their differences and similarities. Pupils are respectful of each other in lessons and around the school. There is an emphasis on character development through the academic and wider curriculum. The school is responsive to British values, which are promoted through assemblies and tutor time.

The school's extra curriculum offer is extensive, covering sports and arts as well as subject and revision clubs. The school provides many leadership opportunities, including form captains, sports captains, the junior leadership team, the diversity group, school prefects, student ambassadors and mental health ambassadors.

The programme for careers is well considered and builds sequentially across the years. Impartial careers advice is supported through the annual careers fair, trips to universities and tutor-time talks. Sixth-form students are supported in preparing for higher education and the world of work. Significant numbers take up valued apprenticeships and many go on to universities of their choice.

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

The curriculum is designed to support the school's vision of ambition, aspiration and success. It reflects the needs of the school's diverse community. In most subjects, the content builds progressively and systematically upon earlier years. In a small number of subjects, the curriculum intent and implementation are not yet fully embedded.

Schemes of work are carefully constructed to include recall and retrieval activities. This ensures that knowledge is retained in pupils' long-term memories. Assessment plays an integral role in supporting pupils' learning and reshaping lessons. Teachers are knowledgeable and passionate.

The sixth-form curriculum includes over 30 academic and applied courses designed to meet the various needs of students at the school. Teaching and learning ensure that students in the sixth form are confident, resilient and independent. Students take responsibility for their studies and constantly seek ways to improve themselves.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well known and well supported. Teachers have a range of strategies to encourage and engage them. Ambition tutors are employed by the school to provide 'a champion for every child'. They work very successfully with disadvantaged pupils to raise their ambitions and aspirations.

Literacy and subject-specific vocabulary are supported across all subjects. Reading is a high priority and suitably encouraged throughout the curriculum. Pupils who fall behind are supported through an online reading programme. Older pupils assist younger pupils with their reading.

The uptake of languages remains an issue that the school is continuing to address. Inspection evidence showed that the languages curriculum has been overhauled, so the number of pupils taking languages is now back on track to contribute towards the Department for Education's targets. Ongoing work is ensuring that languages have a much higher status across the school.

Behaviour and attitudes are supported through high expectations, raised aspirations and a determined focus on success. Attendance levels are improving in line with national averages. Exclusions are low and decreasing over time. Permanent exclusions are rare.

Attitudes to learning in lessons are positive. The school has a team of experienced individuals who oversee pupils' personal development, including a full-time counsellor, a health coordinator, a part-time sexual health nurse, ambition tutors and pastoral support officers.

Leadership is collaborative, distributive and energetic. Relationships are positive and focused on achieving the best for pupils. Continuing professional development is improving pedagogical practice and contributing to raising pupils' aspirations. School leaders actively engage with staff and support them with their workload. Staff are enthusiastic and proud to be associated with the school.

Governors and trustees are knowledgeable about the school and provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. The school benefits considerably from the support of the trust, and the trust benefits equally from the school's support and engagement with other trust schools.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high profile across the school. Leaders are knowledgeable and effective. Staff training is comprehensive, and all staff are suitably updated. The single central record meets statutory requirements. It is regularly checked by the headteacher and safeguarding governor to ensure that it is completed to a high standard.

The safety of pupils has an extremely high priority across the school. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when online. They learn about healthy relationships and issues around consent. Their health, including their mental health, and welfare and well-being are very well supported by the school. Pupils know whom to turn to if they have any issues.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum intent and implementation are not yet fully embedded securely across all subjects. This means that further refinements are needed to ensure that implementation in all subjects is as good as the very best. Leaders should continue to share the very good practice that already exists. They should ensure that the curriculum intent and implementation are fully and firmly embedded across the school.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2016.

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	136456
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10203116
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,697
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	336
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gaenor Bagley
Headteacher	Dr Karen Roberts (Executive Headteacher) Vicki Shaw (Head of School)
Website	www.rainhamgirls-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Rainham School for Girls is much larger than the average 11–18 school and is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT). The school admits boys in the sixth form, with 40 boys on roll at the time of the inspection.
- Five pupils attend alternative provision at three registered education providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, languages and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, talked to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and subject leaders, as well as staff and pupils. They looked at the single central record, spoke with the local authority designated officer, and reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures and practices.
- Inspectors looked at school policies, curriculum documentation, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination statistics. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and a director of the trust.
- Inspectors considered 222 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and 138 additional written comments from parents and carers. They looked at the survey returns completed by 128 staff and 167 pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Norman	Ofsted Inspector

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