

# Inspection of Tiffin School

Queen Elizabeth Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6RL

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

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

Ofsted has not previously inspected Tiffin School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 because, 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 at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

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

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They especially value the vast range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer. These opportunities play an important role in supporting pupils' mental health and well-being. Leaders encourage pupils to set up their own societies. For example, students in the sixth form organise the history society. Pupils celebrate diversity in the school. For example, staff and pupils have developed an LGBTQ+ society. A diversity week was organised and celebrated this year.

Leaders are ambitious for every pupil. Pupils work hard to realise these aspirations across the curriculum and achieve well. The work produced by students in the sixth form is of an exceptional standard. Leaders have carefully planned for the introduction of a co-educational sixth form. Female students play an important part across the whole school. For example, they take up student leadership positions which include working with form groups in the lower school.

Pupils are safe and well supported by staff. They behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. Pupils treat each other and staff with respect and kindness. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident to report any concerns. Staff respond to incidents of bullying swiftly and effectively.

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

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum that introduces pupils to a broad range of subjects. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, and pupils learn very well. For example, Year 7 history pupils know, in detail, the causes of the Crusades and how this knowledge connects to other European histories. Year 12 students can confidently draw on their knowledge of tonal harmony, blues form and the work of Béla Bartók when discussing how music is constructed and used for expressing ideas. These students have excellent musical understanding and excellent practical music skills.

Most subject leaders have clearly identified the important knowledge they want pupils to remember. This careful thinking means that pupils' understanding develops well over time. Pupils debate and discuss their learning confidently. However, the curriculum is not equally strong in all subjects. For example, there is not a coherently planned computing curriculum in place for Years 8 and 9.

Leaders are committed to developing the 'whole child', making sure that pupils are fully prepared for later life. Leaders have ensured that all pupils have access to opportunities beyond the taught curriculum. Almost all pupils take advantage of the extensive range of opportunities provided. For example, all of Year 7 sing in school concerts. All pupils take part in house competitions. These events give pupils the chance to compete in a range of areas that they choose, such as sports, music and literary activities.

Leaders provide specific and detailed careers advice and guidance to all pupils. Teachers guide sixth-form students in planning their university applications or other next steps. This excellent support helps to ensure that a very high proportion of these students attend Russell Group universities. Sixth-form students receive their own personal development programme which covers a range of topics such as financial literacy. School alumni help support current students with careers guidance.

Pupils have exemplary attitudes towards their learning. Teachers know their pupils very well. Leaders ensure that clear routines are in place to identify pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are aware of how to find and use this information to support pupils effectively to learn the curriculum. This includes sixth-form students.

Pupils arrive at the school as confident readers. However, those students who may need additional help with comprehension receive appropriate support. Staff encourage pupils to read. They ensure that pupils read a culturally diverse range of books throughout Years 7, 8 and 9.

Pupils receive timely feedback about their work. Teachers use effective strategies to address misconceptions. Assessment approaches vary between different departments. While leaders rightly value department flexibility, whole-school monitoring does not always identify and share the best practice. For example, assessment approaches sometimes use criteria that do not precisely identify the knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.

Governors have a clear understanding of their role and provide appropriate challenge to school leaders. There are plans in place for governors to oversee specific school priority areas. However, school leaders are not focusing sharply on identifying the most important school priorities.

Staff are well supported by leaders and proud to work in the school. They appreciate how accessible school leaders are, and they feel heard.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are safe and feel safe. Staff are clear about how to raise any concerns about individual pupils. These systems are used effectively by staff. An anonymous reporting system is available for pupils to use if they need it.

The school makes timely and appropriate use of external agencies, as required, to offer additional support for pupils. Regular safeguarding training is provided and understood by staff.

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum to help prepare pupils for the modern world. This curriculum responds to pupils' current needs. For example, there is a focus on mental health following the COVID-19 pandemic.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not identify the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. This means that on occasion, teachers are not consistently clear about what they want pupils to know and remember. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects identifies the core knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and do.
- Sometimes, leaders and governors do not identify the right priorities to work on. For example, in some curriculum areas, leaders' tracking and monitoring are not sharp in relation to what is taught in the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that they monitor and track the most important information.

## 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

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|---|--|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 136910   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Kingston upon Thames   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10228483   |
| <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>                           | Boys   |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 1,418  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 508  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Pip Phillip Phillips   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Michael Gascoigne  |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.tiffinschool.co.uk">www.tiffinschool.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- This school is a selective boys' grammar school with a co-educational sixth form.
- Tiffin School converted to become an academy school in July 2011. When its predecessor school, Tiffin School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, the chair of governors and members of the governing body (including trustees). Inspectors also spoke with the school improvement partner.
- Years 11 and 13 pupils were on study leave during the inspection. Years 7, 8, 9 and 12 were completing internal school assessments and no lessons were being taught. Year 10 pupils were following their normal curriculum.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, computing, history, mathematics, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. It was not possible to visit lessons for all deep-dive subjects. To compensate for this, inspectors spoke to additional groups of pupils, including from the sixth form, and looked at additional examples of work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and reviewed other curriculum documents. Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the safeguarding team, those responsible for governance, pupils and staff to discuss safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors reviewed the single central record and other relevant records.
- Inspectors looked at the results from surveys of staff and pupils, along with Ofsted Parent View free-text comments.

## Inspection team

|                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sophie Healey-Welch, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| David Booth                         | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Stephen Hall                        | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Lauren Thorpe                       | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Mark Phillips                       | Her Majesty's Inspector |

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