

Inspection of John Hampden Grammar School

Marlow Hill, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 1SZ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since May 2008.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's culture is summarised in its ethos statement: '#BeMore'. Pupils and staff embrace this principle in all areas of school life. This means that pupils and students are ambitious, confident, happy and kind.

Pupils and students behave exceptionally well and display exemplary character. Pupils get on with each other and with staff. There is a genuine respect for those with different backgrounds and lifestyles. Pupils feel safe in school; they know that they can speak to someone if they are worried or experience any of the rare instances of bullying, and are confident about the school's response.

Parents and carers, as well as pupils and students who responded to inspectors, agreed that teachers challenge and nurture all pupils. As a result, pupils and students are very successful, not only academically, but also in their wider development. They are enthusiastic for subjects beyond examination courses. They relish discussion and debate.

The '#BeMore' culture means that pupils are equally enthusiastic about the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer, and many take leadership roles in these. Pupils and students feel that their contributions and points of view are valued. Pupils are proud of their school and, as one sixth-form student said: 'This school shapes us and we shape them.'

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

Leaders have designed a rich and ambitious curriculum for all year groups and for all pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff and pupils share leaders' very high expectations and the school's aspirational ethos.

The curriculum is highly ambitious in all subjects. Leaders have deliberately planned sequences of lessons so that learning is sustained, but also so that pupils regularly complete work far beyond what would typically be expected for their age. There is also a rich culture of reading. Pupils read ambitious texts across the curriculum.

Leaders are keen for pupils to apply learning to different contexts. Teachers carefully teach the skills and knowledge that pupils need in order to approach discussion and to debate confidently and appropriately. From Year 7 to Year 13, pupils and students explore age-appropriate but ambitious topics across the curriculum. For example, in history, pupils use what they have learned about conflict to discuss contemporary events. Pupils and students relish this.

Teachers are subject experts. They use assessment and thoughtful questioning to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, access the curriculum and make connections beyond lessons. Teachers make effective adaptations to activities for individuals as required. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve highly and share the

same enthusiasm for learning as their peers. Their confidence and independence are striking. Teachers quickly identify pupils who may need support to catch up. They explain pupils' strengths and how to improve their work. Pupils welcome feedback as part of the '#BeMore' ethos.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. It reflects the school's values of respect, courtesy and maturity. Lessons are free of low-level disruption and pupils make the most of their learning time. Pupils are punctual and attendance is high.

Pastoral care and inclusion are strengths. All staff care deeply that pupils are happy, and they know pupils well. Staff provide targeted support effectively when needed. Leaders are determined that all pupils are able to participate fully in school life, including pupils with SEND. Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used precisely and effectively.

Leaders value pupils' personal development as much as academic outcomes. The school covers themes such as character and resilience. Pupils benefit from a highly effective programme from Year 7 to Year 13 that includes relationships and sex education and British values, but also a wealth of leadership opportunities. For example, sixth-form students enjoy designing and delivering assemblies with staff.

Careers information, education, advice and guidance are also a strength. Leaders have forged relationships with prestigious employers and partners to support the programme. Pupils and students are very well prepared for their next steps. 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. Opportunities for work experience are closely linked to future destinations. Students generally go on to university after the sixth form, but more are going on to degree apprenticeships.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to high-quality and varied training opportunities. They are also mindful of workload and staff feel listened to and valued.

Trustees know the school very well and have set the school's clear vision. They hold leaders closely to account for standards, safeguarding, and staff development and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. All staff are trained well to identify pupils who need help. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils or adults. Where pupils need help or external support, leaders respond appropriately. Referrals are made in a timely manner.

Leaders effectively manage safer recruitment and, if necessary, allegations against staff.

Leaders ensure that pupils and students receive ambitious and age-appropriate education so that they know how to keep themselves safe. This includes understanding signs of negative relationships, sexual violence and online risk. Pupils are vigilant for others.

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.

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	136771
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10229053
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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,232
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	319
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Maskell
Headteacher	Tracey Hartley
Website	www.jhgs.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- John Hampden Grammar School converted to become an academy in February 2012. When its predecessor school, also called John Hampden Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is a standalone academy.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2016.
- 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.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, languages, history, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons and discussed learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, staff and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the trust. They scrutinised documents, including those relating to behaviour, attendance and governance.
- Inspectors observed pupils at different times during the school day, including tutor time, assemblies and break- and lunchtimes. They spoke to pupils from all year groups and took account of the responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. They visited lessons to look at the support these pupils were receiving.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and comments made by those who responded.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's website and policies, met with leaders and spoke with pupils and staff. They scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with trustees. They scrutinised a selection of safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Mary Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Burridge	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Roessler	Ofsted Inspector
Dave Euridge	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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