

# Inspection of a good school: Grays Convent High School

College Avenue, Grays, Essex RM17 5UX

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Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2023

## **Outcome**

Grays Convent High School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They feel part of a supportive family where relationships are very strong between pupils and staff. Pupils value and live up to the school's ethos. They gain confidence and learn well at the school.

Pupils appreciate and benefit from teachers' support and expertise. Pupils develop the reading and mathematical skills they need to learn the curriculum successfully. They also confidently recall and apply learning from different subjects to the real-life examples teachers provide.

Pupils embrace the extensive opportunities for personal development at the school. This helps pupils develop skills beyond the curriculum and prepares them well for their next steps. Pupils value the 'Rise Above' events, where they learn about important topics such as positive relationships and laws.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well. Pupils feel confident that on the rare occasions when bullying occurs, teachers deal with it effectively so that it stops and does not reoccur. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other's differences. Pupils know that staff will keep them safe.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. The curriculum is coherently planned, aspirational and meets the requirements of the national curriculum. Most pupils study the range of subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate. This ensures that they can access the full range of key stage 5 courses available locally.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They are well trained and use their training effectively to develop the curriculum. Teachers enrich the curriculum through creative activities, including by using real-life artefacts and examples. Many teachers check to

ensure that pupils remember and understand what has been taught. These teachers use the information from these checks to plan suitable next steps for pupils.

In some subjects, leaders have not clarified well enough exactly what pupils must know, meaning some teaching is not directly targeted at the knowledge pupils need. Some teachers do not identify when pupils forget or misunderstand parts of the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as leaders intend.

Pupils develop the reading skills needed to access the curriculum. The teaching of key vocabulary is a priority. It is explicitly taught in lessons to ensure that pupils understand its meaning. Pupils use key vocabulary competently when speaking and writing.

Leaders have identified the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have also provided teachers with the guidance needed to plan effective learning activities for these pupils. Not all teachers understand or use the guidance well enough to plan support to enable these pupils to learn what they need. As a result, the support for some pupils does not meet their needs.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils know and adhere to leaders' behaviour expectations. Pupils appreciate achievement points when awarded. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. When behaviour does not meet expectations, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively. Leaders' new approach to behaviour management is having a positive impact.

Leaders are proud of, and pupils value, the enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities at the school. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to develop their talents and interests, for example through the Thurrock Trailblazer project. Leaders ensure that pupils have the necessary knowledge to stay safe and become productive future citizens.

Senior leaders and governors lead by example. Leaders and governors have positive relationships with staff, parents and carers. They also work well with other schools and community organisations. Staff feel supported and valued. They say that leaders care about their workload and manage it effectively. Governors check pupils' well-being, including how well they are kept safe, and ensure that leaders make improvements when necessary.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the pupils well. They are aware of the local safeguarding risks. Staff are well trained and vigilant to the signs of potential harm.

Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about how to reduce the potential risks they might face in order to stay safe. For example, pupils are helped to understand healthy relationships and the importance of consent.

Staff encourage pupils to share their worries. When concerns arise, staff take swift and appropriate action to support pupils and their families.

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

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

- Some teachers do not support pupils with SEND well enough. As a result, some pupils do not learn aspects of the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to ensure that pupils with SEND learn consistently well.
- In some subjects, leaders do not set out specifically what pupils should learn. Some teachers do not check what pupils know and understand well enough. This means that, at times, pupils do not learn what leaders intend and that some misconceptions are not addressed. Leaders should ensure that what pupils need to learn is clearly set out in all subjects and that staff check pupils' learning consistently and purposefully.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115239
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268585
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	637
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Laurie Eve
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Johnson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.graysconvent.school">https://www.graysconvent.school</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- Grays Convent High School is a Catholic school founded by La Sainte Union Sisters. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2018. The next inspection will take place within eight school years.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and designated safeguarding lead (DSL), two assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator,

eight governors, the secondary link adviser for the Diocese of Brentwood and the assistant director for education and skills for Thurrock Council.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, drama and computing. 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 looked at a range of Year 11 revision lessons.
- When evaluating safeguarding, inspectors met with the DSL and the business manager, they reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered 45 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses, 54 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 32 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Sarah Fowler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Elizabeth Shapland

Ofsted Inspector

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