

Inspection of Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School

Southfield Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9UJ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

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	Outstanding

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 under section 5 of the Act since November 2011.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has exceptionally high expectations of all pupils, which they consistently meet. Across the curriculum, pupils keenly engage in challenging subject content. Staff foster a love of each subject so that all pupils thrive in their phase and are well prepared for their next stages of learning. As a result, pupils enjoy school. They excel academically and flourish as well-rounded individuals. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they feel safe and valued. They are very confident that any concerns they raise will be responded to appropriately by staff.

Pupils are remarkably proud of their school. They engage with an exceptional selection of extra-curricular activities from Years 7 to 13. These range from choirs to sports clubs. Many clubs and societies are pupil-led, including political debating and 'crochet and craft'. They enjoy an extensive array of rich opportunities designed to nurture their talents and interests. Pupils value honing their leadership skills. They feel that their voice is heard and that they have a powerful say in their school community through, for example, the 'Legacy Project'. As one parent commented, 'There is an inclusive, supportive atmosphere, with a 'can do' ethos. Pupils are always encouraged to give their best.'

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

Staff promote high aspirations and expectations for the learning of all pupils across the curriculum. In each subject, the curriculum is built thoughtfully to support pupils gaining a deep understanding of knowledge over time. The school has ensured that the curriculum is diverse and that pupils explore themes relevant to the world around them, such as inclusivity and equality.

The subject knowledge of teachers is excellent. This means that pupils benefit from very clear explanations and rich discussion and debate in lessons. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are superbly supported to access the curriculum and achieve exceptionally well. As a result, pupils speak confidently about their learning. Pupils are highly diligent and reflective. They discuss their strengths and areas for improvement using a wide range of precise vocabulary that they are taught within the curriculum. They relish the opportunity to meet their own high expectations within a learning community that provides them with everything they need.

The school has ensured there is a highly effective culture of success and achievement across the sixth form. The sixth-form offer is broad and dynamic. Staff demonstrate highly effective assessment of understanding and feedback, which supports all pupils to develop a deep understanding of what they are taught. Sixth-form students play an active part in the wider life of the school. They recognise that their student leadership roles enable them to work towards common goals as a community with the rest of the school. There is also an active alumni, which supports and guides current students.

The school has established a strong culture of reading, with opportunities for pupils within different subjects to develop a love of a wide range of literature. Staff promote and engage pupils in ambitious texts across the curriculum.

The well-being of pupils is a high priority. Pastoral care is central to the role of every staff member. Staff teams across the school work sensitively together with external agencies to ensure that all pupils receive the support that they are entitled to. Pupils appreciate the diligent monitoring of their progress and well-being. They explore a wealth of important issues related to the world and their well-being through regular assemblies and activities in their forms. Pupils are also taught relevant and thought-provoking personal, social and health education lessons. As a result, pupils confidently share their detailed understanding about age-appropriate relationships and the importance of concepts such as consent and respect. For example, key stage 4 pupils are encouraged to reflect on the impact of their actions upon others. Pupils across the school also receive excellent impartial careers information to help them prepare for their next steps.

Pupils are extremely polite and highly motivated to learn. In lessons, they are keenly engaged and committed to mastering what they are being taught. Pupils' behaviour is calm around the school. They respect and exemplify the long-established values of the school. Pupil uptake of clubs is high, particularly in key stage 3. Pupils strongly benefit from purposeful opportunities to support other communities through charity fundraising, such as supporting a school in Ghana.

Leaders across the school are unwavering in their ambition for all pupils. Governors are very knowledgeable and well informed about the school. They work skilfully with leaders to ensure that all pupils are provided with a first-class education. Staff feel exceptionally well supported by the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	118789
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10287927
Type of school	Grammar
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,045
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rosie Serpis
Headteacher	Linda Wybar (Executive headteacher) Katie Marchant (Associate headteacher)
Website	www.twggs.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 November 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school works with The Skinners' School to offer sixth-form students access to courses in both schools. A small number of male students from The Skinners' School therefore study one or more A levels at Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders from across the school. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school and discussed wider development opportunities with leaders and pupils.
- Inspectors considered 234 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 150 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 65 responses to the staff survey and 330 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils to gather their views.

Inspection team

Hanna Miller, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Yvonne Garvey	Ofsted Inspector
Rupert Prutton	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Carlyle	Ofsted Inspector

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