

Inspection of Gordano School

St Mary's Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 7QR

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024, and 4 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Louise Blundell. This school is part of Lighthouse Schools Partnership which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gary Lewis and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adele Haysom.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. 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 graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils relish learning a breadth of subjects at Gordano School. For instance, most pupils have the opportunity to study French or Spanish in depth, as well as creative arts subjects such as, dance, drama, and art and design. Students in the sixth form thrive. They value the high quality of education that they receive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy learning at the school. Pupils' achievement is strong.

The school offers an array of enrichment opportunities for pupils, including theatre trips and visits to places of educational importance. For example, pupils studying languages visit the British Film Institute to enhance their cultural understanding. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports, such as netball and rugby.

The school has raised its expectations of pupils' behaviour. Typically, pupils behave well. In lessons, they listen carefully, buoyed up by the praise that they receive from their teachers. The learning environment in the sixth form is equally harmonious.

During social times, most pupils behave sensibly and in a cooperative manner. They benefit from positive and courteous relationships with staff. Skilled staff provide effective support for the few pupils who, at times, find it more difficult to regulate their own behaviour.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about the importance of kindness and empathy. Many pupils have a strong moral compass. They demonstrate respect for the differences between people.

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

The school has developed a well-structured curriculum that enables pupils to learn successfully. In many subjects, pupils build on their prior knowledge securely, which helps them to learn more complex concepts. For example, pupils have a strong understanding of core mathematical concepts which enables them to solve difficult problems.

The school has improved the support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. The robust processes in place enable staff to identify pupils' additional needs swiftly and accurately. Leaders have a moral drive to ensure that the curriculum supports all pupils to succeed. For example, the 'Gordano Learning' approach to the teaching of the curriculum is implemented well. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. In most areas, teachers check what pupils know and do not know. Teachers use this information to address pupils' misconceptions and to shape future learning.

In a few subjects, however, some teachers do not adapt the curriculum sufficiently well for pupils with SEND. On occasion, some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could.

The school has established a well-designed programme to support those who struggle with reading. Through a range of coordinated approaches, pupils flourish. Additionally, pupils develop a wider love of reading through the whole school reading programme. The library is used purposefully to support pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Students in the sixth form study a broad and well-structured curriculum. They value the many opportunities available to develop their leadership skills. For example, students run clubs and activities for younger pupils. Pupils and sixth-form students benefit from an effective careers curriculum. For example, pupils experience the world of work in Year 10. They receive comprehensive guidance about their next steps. Sixth-form students, in particular, receive in-depth support to help them to successfully access higher education, work or apprenticeships.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, study a well-designed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. They are knowledgeable about different forms of discrimination and how this can impact people and society. Pupils clearly articulate their understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship and the concept of consent. They know that the use of prejudicial, including misogynistic language, is completely unacceptable. Although a few pupils report that some of their peers use discriminatory language, the school has put a range of effective strategies in place to address this issue. Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils and sixth-form students are well prepared for British society as they learn about the importance of freedom of speech and democracy.

The school has ensured that staff are clear about what constitutes poor behaviour and the approaches to managing this. Most pupils fully understand what is expected of them. As such, classrooms are typically calm and purposeful. The school has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, and, over time, the rate of suspensions has reduced.

Most pupils regulate their behaviour well. There is a myriad of strategies in place to support pupils' individual behaviour needs. However, from time to time, some pupils perceive that staff treat other pupils differently regarding their behaviour and that this is unfair. Pupils recognise that some of their peers require additional support to manage their behaviour and emotions. However, the school has not ensured that pupils understand that this may result in staff meeting these pupils' needs in different ways.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at the school. They feel highly supported by leaders, including the board of trustees. They value the well-thought-out professional development opportunities. Staff receive strong support for their emotional well-being and workload. Trustees and governors have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. As a result, those responsible for governance, provide suitable challenge and support to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some teachers do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum consistently well for pupils with SEND. On occasion, this hinders how well some pupils with SEND learn. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are fully equipped to support pupils with SEND to learn as well as they should.
- The school has not ensured that some pupils fully understand that other pupils require reasonable adjustments to the behaviour policy. This sometimes leads to pupils perceiving that the behaviour policy is applied inconsistently. The school should ensure that the whole-school community understands that equity and fairness underpin its approaches to meeting pupils' individual behaviour needs.

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	136856
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10297986
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2157
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	343
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adele Haysom
CEO of trust	Gary Lewis
Headteacher	Louise Blundell
Website	www.gordanoschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gordano School is a larger than average size secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below the national average.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers and five unregistered alternative providers.
- 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 educational 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection started on 30 April 2024. Inspectors returned on 4 June 2024 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: [Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy](#).
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal, members of the leadership team and a range of other staff.
- Inspectors held discussions with the CEO, the director of secondary education for the trust, two members of the board of trustees and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and design technology. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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 reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document and records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, during breaktimes and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to many pupils, including students in the sixth form, about their experiences of school, including their views about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

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