

Inspection of Penwortham Girls' High School

Cop Lane, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 0SR

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	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 2014

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud to be part of this welcoming and happy school community. They develop strong and trusting relationships with staff and their peers. Older pupils relish taking on roles such as 'happy mind' leaders. Through such positions, they help younger pupils to make friends and settle into school quickly.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), behave exceptionally well. They respond positively to the 'passport to success' reward system which promotes the school's values. Pupils are extremely polite and understand the importance of respecting the differences that exist between themselves and others. This contributes to a calm learning environment where pupils are free to be themselves.

Pupils live up to the school's exceedingly high expectations for their academic success. They are keen to succeed and they strive to do their very best. Pupils leave Year 11 with a wide body of knowledge across all of the subjects that they study. They are exceptionally well prepared to move into further education, training or employment.

Pupils access a vast array of events and activities beyond the academic curriculum. These serve to promote their understanding of the wider world, harness their talents and develop their sense of empathy and responsibility. For example, pupils relish the chance to be part of the many 'action groups' that exist in the school. Many pupils participate in the wide range of international trips that are on offer. These visits enable them to take part in activities such as rocket building and scuba diving as well as enriching their knowledge of historical battles, glaciers and engineering.

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

Pupils access a carefully designed and highly ambitious curriculum. The school has thought deeply about the knowledge that pupils need for their future success. This is seamlessly interwoven with a wide range of experiences that enhance pupils' learning and capture their interests.

Teachers are expert in using the curriculum guidance to design learning activities that enable pupils to deepen their knowledge over time. Pupils are given ample opportunities to connect what they already know with new learning. This enables them to grasp increasingly complex concepts. The focus on vocabulary means that pupils gain a strong understanding of subject-specific language. The systematic checks on what pupils know and remember help teachers to address misconceptions quickly. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress across the curriculum. Their attainment by the end of Year 11 is significantly above the national average in most subjects.

The school has well-established and effective systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers use the information that they receive about

pupils' needs to adapt the delivery of subject content. This helps pupils to access the curriculum and achieve exceptionally well.

The joy of reading is promoted very well. Across the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to immerse themselves in books. Those pupils who find reading difficult receive timely and effective support. This ensures that they overcome gaps in their reading knowledge. Consequently, pupils read with accuracy and fluency. This contributes to their success in other curriculum areas.

Pupils engage extremely well in their learning. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their studies. The school expertly supports the small number of pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour. This means that learning is unhindered by disruption. Pupils attend school regularly and on time.

The school's programme to promote pupils' personal development is exemplary. There are extensive opportunities to develop pupils' interests and talents. For instance, pupils explore global issues and learn about advocacy and human rights through the form time 'referendum'. The school also uses its 'buddy form' programme to strengthen pupils' awareness of their community and charitable projects. Diversity is celebrated well. Pupils relish the opportunities to learn about cultural traditions and different faiths. As such, pupils have a mature understanding of fundamental British values. They are prepared very well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils receive a comprehensive careers information and guidance programme. This helps them to make aspirational choices about their future careers.

Leaders at all levels, along with a motivated staff team, have successfully maintained the excellent quality of education at this school over a sustained period of time. Governors offer well informed support and challenge that has aided the school's continued improvement. Staff are immensely grateful for the consideration that is given to their workload and their professional development.

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	119765
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10337673
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	801
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorimer Russell-Hayes
Headteacher	Sharon Hall
Website	www.penworthamgirls.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 November 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the South Ribble Learning Federation.
- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2024.
- The school uses six registered and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- 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 education 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 that 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, design and technology, English, modern foreign languages and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils.
- Inspectors met with leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for pupils' personal development, behaviour and attendance, alternative provision, careers, the provision for SEND and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and records relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

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