

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe

Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6QT

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Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

## Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Philip Wayne. This school is the only school in the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ben Casemore.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school focuses tirelessly on developing every pupil's 'individual potential and character'. Consequently, pupils flourish at this vibrant, welcoming and happy school. They are extremely proud to come here. Pupils live and breathe the school's values of 'respect, integrity and aspiration' every day. They display exceptionally positive behaviour and relationships, both with each other and with staff. Pupils also embrace all aspects of school life with open arms, not least the vast array of extra-curricular activities. Sixth-form students are impressive role models for younger pupils.

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious, and pupils study a broad range of subjects from Year 7 onwards. Staff and pupils share the strong belief that every pupil can reach their individual potential, regardless of background or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils in all years rise to academic challenges enthusiastically. They also relish exploring subjects beyond the classroom. Consequently, all pupils achieve highly, including in public examinations.

'Care' is a strong feature of the school that is valued by parents and carers and pupils alike. Staff know pupils very well and pupils trust staff to help them when necessary. Pupils are also very well informed about how to care for their own well-being and that of others.

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

The curriculum has been very thoughtfully designed in each subject. Pupils are extremely well prepared for each new phase of learning because they build and connect knowledge from Year 7. In all key stages, the curriculum is delivered to a very high standard. Staff understand clearly what pupils must know and be able to do at each point of their learning. The school identifies pupils with SEND swiftly and carefully pinpoints how to help them. Staff use this information to make necessary adjustments in lessons. As a result, staff select approaches that help all pupils to embed learning and inspire them to explore topics more deeply. Tasks gradually become increasingly demanding, but staff carefully check pupils are ready before moving on. Pupils value and use the feedback they receive to improve their work. Sixth-form lessons routinely provide opportunities for rich discussions about complex concepts and ideas. Consequently, in addition to securing excellent examination results, pupils approach learning enthusiastically, growing in curiosity and resilience. This starts from Year 7 and includes all pupils.

Reading has a high priority in the school. Teachers in all subjects expose pupils to interesting texts that add breadth and depth to their studies. The library offers a welcoming environment with a wide range of relevant and demanding texts that draw pupils in. The school supports pupils who may need help to read as confidently as their peers very effectively.

Staff have very successfully created a culture of high standards of behaviour and attendance. These standards are embraced by the pupils because they value the school experience. Rare incidents of poor behaviour or attendance are addressed very effectively. Staff provide thoughtful support based on their knowledge of individuals. For example, a few pupils follow a carefully conceived programme in the 'Student Development Centre'. It helps pupils improve any behaviour or attendance issues quickly. It also helps them with their learning and confidence by addressing any learning gaps.

The school's work on character development and community is impressive. Generosity and altruism are key features of this work. Pupils speak of 'camaraderie', which is nurtured by a culture of 'belonging and happiness'. Sixth-form students very willingly give their time in a range of leadership roles. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips on offer. These activities enable pupils to nurture existing interests and talents, discover new ones and feel part of the wider community. The school ensures that all pupils can join in, regardless of their background.

The personal development curriculum is carefully sequenced so that pupils revisit themes from Year 7 to 13 in an age-appropriate manner. They learn how to keep themselves safe and maintain positive and respectful relationships, including online. Through the excellent careers programme, pupils are regularly exposed to representatives from the world of work, education and training, including school alumni. Consequently, pupils are extremely well prepared for their next steps and to be positive citizens of modern Britain.

The school's continuous actions to improve standards are highly effective, and the school's preparations for its new co-education sixth form are thorough and thoughtful. Trustees'

oversight of the school is very strong, not least in terms of safeguarding. Staff are extremely proud to work here. They feel respected and value the care taken with their workload. Parents are extremely positive about the school. They praise the balance struck between high academic standards and the way the school prepares every pupil for 'happiness and success in their adult lives'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we the school was judged to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136484
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341676
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,418
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ben Casemore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Philip Wayne
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rgshw.com">www.rgshw.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	9 and 10 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is the only school in the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe single academy trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the board of trustees.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and considered their opinions expressed through the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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' interest first.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and considered the opinions expressed through Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Serridge	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Morrison	Ofsted Inspector

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