

Tolworth Girls' School and Sixth Form

Fullers Way North, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 7LQ

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's leadership has ensured that the school has continued to improve over time and provides an outstanding education for pupils.
- Governors share the vision for the school and have played a key role in supporting and challenging leaders to achieve it. Leaders have identified the need to be more innovative in their practice, for example in how they stretch and challenge the most able in their learning.
- Staff are aspirational for their pupils and want the best for them. Staff work together effectively to ensure that pupils make excellent progress and are well cared for.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Learning activities are challenging and purposeful. Pupils use subject-specialist vocabulary with real confidence. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and progress.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. This is an inclusive school where all pupils are valued and feel safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have positive attitudes to learning in class and their conduct around the school is exemplary.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average. This ensures that they can make the most of all the learning opportunities.
- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects because of consistently strong teaching. School leaders recognise that the most able pupils would benefit from further challenge in learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making rapid progress and attaining in line with their peers. This is because leaders set this group of pupils ambitious targets and pupils benefit from outstanding teaching.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress because of effective leadership and strong support in classes.
- The sixth form provision is outstanding. Students on a range of academic and vocational courses are supported effectively to achieve their best.
- The school's induction and transition programmes ensure that pupils and students complete GCSE and sixth form courses successfully. All sixth form students progress to university, apprenticeships or employment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes for the most able pupils across the school by teachers challenging pupils to think more widely and deeply about their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership has ensured that the school has continued to develop and strengthen over time. Together with the senior team, she has placed pupils, as individuals, at the heart of the school's vision. Pupils thrive in this positive learning environment.
- Leadership at all levels is strong. Leaders have ensured that staff across the school understand their job roles and what is expected of them. Support staff and newly qualified teachers, as well as middle and senior leaders, are clear about the school's priorities and the part they play in delivering the best education for the pupils. Leaders have identified the need to be more innovative in their practice to improve the school even further. The school's capacity to improve further is strong.
- The curriculum is an effective blend of academic and creative subjects. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and they appreciate the opportunities to develop their talents more widely. Leaders review the subjects offered regularly and pupils also have a voice, for example in the inclusion of A-level dance. Leaders have effectively complemented the formal curriculum with the tutor programme and a wide range of clubs, visits and literary events.
- The excellent leadership of teaching, learning and assessment, performance management and professional training for staff has ensured that pupils enjoy a wide range of quality learning experiences. Pupils are set challenging targets. Senior and middle leaders visit classes to look at pupils' work regularly to check on their progress. They take action if there are any concerns about pupils' learning. Consequently, there is a high level of consistency across subjects and key stages.
- Leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up effectively. The spending has a strong positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about British values, respect and tolerance. They are proud of the diversity of their school. Leaders ensure that equality for all is a reality by taking robust action to ensure that the curriculum and teaching meet the needs of all groups of pupils, enabling them to be successful.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils use their studies of other faiths and cultures to reflect on their own and others' perspectives. They develop empathy skills and consider questions of right and wrong with great maturity.

Governance of the school

- The governing body gives robust support and challenge to school leaders. This ensures that the aspirational ethos of the school has a strong impact on pupils' outcomes and next steps. Governors were quick to work alongside leaders following the 2016

mathematics results to immediately take action to address the dip in performance. As a result, pupils' attainment in mathematics improved significantly in 2017.

- The governing body has a strong vision for the future of the school. Its leadership has ensured that new buildings and facilities will shortly be available for pupils to support their learning. Governors are skilled, knowledgeable and have up-to-date training. They use their skills highly effectively to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders are knowledgeable and operate open, transparent procedures, in line with the safeguarding policy. Leaders take every opportunity to review their practice to further enhance the safeguarding culture to protect pupils. All staff understand their responsibilities and they report concerns quickly.
- Leaders accurately identify risks to pupils in the community and take steps to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe and learn how to manage risk for themselves. Pupils say that they are well informed and find topics in tutor time and the talks in assemblies about staying safe, for example on the internet, useful.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Staff have successfully created a positive learning atmosphere and ethos across all subjects and key stages. As a result, all groups of pupils say that adults support them well and help them to learn and make progress. Pupils impressed inspectors with their aspirations and strong desire to excel.
- Teachers set high expectations for pupils' learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and they plan purposeful activities which interest and challenge pupils to think and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning and progress alongside the class activities. Teachers make sure that pupils always know what is expected of them, and refer to the assessment criteria so that pupils can see how well they are doing. Teachers support pupils' learning and assessment by using well-designed, quality resources that meet pupils' different needs and abilities.
- Teachers have strong questioning skills. They deploy a wide range of different strategies for questioning, which encourage pupils to extend their knowledge and to deepen their understanding. In a Year 7 history class, the teacher's skilful questioning enabled pupils to explore different points of view about the use of evidence to explain chronology.
- Pupils understand subject-specialist vocabulary and use these terms readily when talking about their learning in class. This is because teachers always use subject vocabulary when talking to pupils and so set the expectation that pupils will engage with subject language in the same way. This has a strong positive impact on pupils' self-confidence and progress. The effective use of subject terminology was a common

theme across all subjects, from pupils discussing profit and loss in business studies to using the technical language of music and dance.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have opportunities in classes to discuss opinions and to work collaboratively to share and explore ideas. This enables pupils to develop into confident, articulate young people, which has a powerful impact on their personal development.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that adults will deal with any instances that occur. Pupils know how to report their concerns. Leaders evaluate the outcome of any action taken so that procedures and the school's strong anti-bullying message can be adapted and further refined.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they value the work the school does through the tutorial programme and assemblies to keep them informed. The school is proactive in working with outside agencies, organisations and professionals to provide a high level of care for pupils.
- The school is fully committed to the active promotion of respect for diversity and equalities – for example, through the school's lesbian, gay and bisexual society.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well in class. They are highly involved in their learning and concentrate well. There are strong relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff, which foster a positive learning environment.
- Pupils' conduct is excellent. They are courteous and polite. Art work is proudly displayed and completely safe because pupils are respectful of each other's work. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger ones. Pupils move around the school in a calm, orderly manner. They navigate the routes around the school during building work with maturity.
- Pupils who sometimes struggle to meet the school's high standards of behaviour remain committed to the school's ethos and expectations. This is because leaders manage pupils' behaviour effectively and clearly focus on meeting pupils' needs. Pupils were keen to talk to inspectors about how adults help them to improve their attitude and behaviour.
- Pupils who are educated off-site at Malden Oaks, the school's use of alternative provision, settle well. Their behaviour and attendance improve and have a positive impact on their learning and outcomes.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and their attendance is consistently above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved significantly.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make sustained and substantial progress over time across the curriculum, particularly in English, humanities, and the creative and performing arts.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school learn well and make strong progress across a broad range of subjects. Historically, this group of pupils have made less progress than non-disadvantaged pupils within the school and other pupils nationally. However, work in pupils' books show that these differences have diminished or are closing rapidly. Leaders set very challenging targets for disadvantaged pupils, equivalent to the top 5% of pupils nationally, and support pupils to achieve these.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with education, health and care plans, make strong progress. The leadership of special educational needs ensures that adults support these pupils well in class, enabling them to enjoy learning and to meet their challenging targets.
- The most able pupils are positive about their learning experiences. They say that they are challenged in class, and visits to classes and work in pupils' books support this view. However, leaders have identified that the most able pupils need to make even more progress so that more attain the very top grades in examinations.
- Pupils' communication skills are developed well. Learning activities are designed to enable pupils to participate and develop speaking and listening skills. Reading has a high profile in the school. The librarian described pupils as 'devouring' books, so great is their enthusiasm. Year 7 pupils talked excitedly about the library, and the range and quality of books. Older pupils talked about the visiting authors and poets, and the literary environment created.
- Pupils attending alternative provision make good progress in their GCSE studies because they are supported effectively.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders have developed highly effective induction programmes for each key stage, which ensures that pupils can settle quickly and thrive in their academic studies.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- School leaders have developed a fully inclusive sixth form, where students of all abilities and with a broad range of aspirations are encouraged and supported effectively to be successful.
- Students benefit from a strong induction programme and ongoing support from staff. This ensures that they are very well prepared for the challenges of study in the sixth form. They learn a valuable range of study skills, including how to skim read, take notes and develop their long-term memory. This provides them with effective preparation and support as they study for A-level examinations. As a result, students are confident and highly motivated.
- Sixth form students benefit from consistently high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. Similarly to the main school, students' learning is characterised by high

levels of challenge, clear purpose and a strong focus on students using specialist-subject vocabulary. Leaders' focus on developing quality teaching has reduced inconsistencies in outcomes between subjects.

- Outcomes for students are improving rapidly. In 2017, unvalidated information shows that Year 12 students taking AS levels made above-average progress overall across a wide range of subjects. The progress of Year 13 A-level and vocational students also improved. A high proportion of students, including the most able, meet their challenging targets. Students without GCSEs in English and mathematics retake these subjects, and the proportion attaining these qualifications is well above the national average.
- Students feel very well prepared for the next stage of their education and say that the school supports their aspirations. In 2017, 85% of Year 13 students progressed to university, including Russell Group universities, nearly a quarter of these to study science, biomedical, engineering and mathematics subjects. Students are also successful in gaining apprenticeships and employment.
- Students participate in a wide range of enrichment opportunities through the tutorial programme, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, team building, arts and sport. Students take on a range of roles which enable them to support younger pupils and act as positive role models. Students' learning is extended through additional extended project qualifications and vocational courses which enable them to plan their own activities and reflect on their experience. All students participate in two weeks' work experience in Year 12.

School details

Unique reference number	137060
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10036355

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,262
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	230
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jeremy Slater
Headteacher	Siobhan Lowe
Telephone number	020 8397 3854
Website	www.tolworthgirlsschool.co.uk
Email address	info@tolworthgirlsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 September 2012

Information about this school

- Tolworth Girls' School and Sixth Form is an academy in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
- At the time of the inspection, there was building work on the school site to provide additional school buildings and facilities.
- Boys are admitted to the sixth form. The school is non-selective and admits pupils across the ability range in a local authority with grammar schools.

- The school uses alternative provision at Malden Oaks, Dukes Avenue, Kingston. Four pupils currently attend this provision.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes in all year groups to observe pupils' learning. Some of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders.
- Five groups of pupils, including sixth form students, talked to inspectors about their views of the school. Inspectors also talked with pupils in classes and at breaktime and lunchtime. There were five responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books when visiting classes and scrutinised a selection of pupils' books from the previous academic year. This was to see how well pupils are learning over time and what impact this has on their progress.
- An inspector had a telephone conversation with the headteacher of the alternative provision used by the school.
- Meetings were held with governors, including the chair and the co-vice chairs.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, and senior and middle leaders, to discuss the impact of their work.
- Newly qualified teachers and support staff met with inspectors to discuss their views of the school and how school leaders support them in their roles.
- Inspector scrutinised school documents including the school's own self-evaluation, records of pupils' progress, and behaviour and attendance and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors considered 74 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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