

Inspection of Townley Grammar School

Townley Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7AB

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 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 since November 2015.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. They feel highly valued and know that their voices are heard. For example, pupils made a significant contribution to the choice of books that they now study in English. The books selected not only support pupils to deepen their knowledge of literature, but also help pupils to feel that the diversity in the Townley community is valued.

New pupils are warmly welcomed to the school. This includes boys in the sixth form. Pupils participate in an impressive range of activities outside their studies, from the annual school production and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to a variety of sports and visits overseas to places such as India, Japan and Argentina.

Trustees, leaders and staff are incredibly ambitious for pupils. All pupils study a wide range of subjects. Every pupil learns Latin, as well as at least one modern foreign language. Dance is a very popular subject among pupils. They described it as 'the beating heart of the school'. Pupils also benefit from a rich mathematics, science and engineering curriculum. They enjoy their learning immensely.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They take responsibility for their own behaviour, and staff rarely need to correct it. They are keen to start their learning in lessons. Pupils thrive in this environment of high academic challenge and comprehensive pastoral care. Pupils know what bullying is but said that it happens rarely. Any issues are resolved quickly. Pupils are kept safe.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is academically ambitious. It prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education or the world of work. In Years 7 to 9, pupils study a broad range of subjects. From Year 10, pupils choose subjects that both interest them and prepare them for their goals for the future. Students in the sixth form also get to choose from a wide range of A-level subjects. In addition to these courses, all students study further 'electives', such as art appreciation and pharmaceutical science. These are expertly planned to enrich pupils' academic learning and enhance their understanding of the wider world. Across the school, pupils excel in their studies.

Subject leaders think in depth about the key knowledge pupils need to know and remember in their subject. They plan for pupils to build this knowledge step by step over time so that they are ready to study more complex ideas in the future. For example, in languages, from Year 7 onwards, pupils learn how to read, write and speak about their families, their interests and school. They return to these topics, learning more vocabulary, new tenses and more complex grammar each time. This improves their ability to read, write and speak about these topics with confidence in their chosen language.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember. They use a variety of techniques to look for gaps in pupils' knowledge or identify misconceptions. They waste no time correcting any mistakes that they find. Pupils are supported to become independent learners. They readily take responsibility for improving their learning, for example through accessing a wide range of additional learning resources via the school's online learning platform. Sixth-form students are also keen to challenge themselves, with many choosing to do the extended project qualification.

Leaders check that pupils can read accurately and fluently when they join the school. Support is quickly put in place to help any pupils who struggle. Leaders promote a love of reading and time is set aside every day for pupils to read. Leaders also quickly identify the needs of any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND receive the support needed to successfully access all learning.

Pupils are eager to learn. They listen carefully to teachers and one another. Pupils engage maturely in discussions in class, and they take pride in their work.

Leaders have developed a unique and exemplary programme for personal development. They give careful thought to how best to meet their aim of developing pupils' independence, character and curiosity. Through the character and well-being programme, pupils are taught age-appropriate subject content about relationships and sex education. It is enhanced by the '21c' and 'EDGE' programmes where pupils are encouraged to develop their critical thinking skills, creativity and independence.

The enrichment offer is extensive. Pupils participate regularly in sporting and creative activities such as music, dance and photography. They can also attend clubs to support their studies. Leaders check that all pupils are taking part in these opportunities.

Pupils are prepared for their future careers and the world of work. Careers education starts in Year 7 and continues throughout the school. While most students in the sixth form go to university, leaders also introduce them to other options that are available, for example apprenticeships. Students receive comprehensive support and guidance from staff when making applications.

Staff receive high-quality training, both in and outside school. Leaders and trustees seek the views of staff, and they respond to their suggestions. Staff value this dialogue and feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They fully support the vision and work of the senior leadership team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff receive safeguarding training at the start of the year, and this is updated frequently. Staff

are aware of the local risks that pupils face and they are well equipped to identify vulnerable pupils and report concerns. Leaders work well with outside agencies, reporting and following up on incidents promptly.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both physically and online. Leaders invite outside speakers to speak to pupils, for example about healthy relationships. If pupils have concerns, they know who to speak to and they trust that staff will listen to them.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	137769
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10240541
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,581
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	458
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Rouse
Headteacher	Nevita Pandya
Website	www.townleygrammar.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a selective girls' grammar school that admits boys in the sixth form.
- Leaders do not make any use of alternative provision.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19

pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with the chair of the trust and three other trustees.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, science, geography and dance. For each deep dive, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers to discuss the curriculum. Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in other subjects, including mathematics, religious studies, classics, design and technology, engineering and politics.
- Through discussions with leaders, trustees, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. Inspectors also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of employment checks carried out before staff are appointed.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils in all key stages. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes was observed.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about the school's work, including safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors also looked at staff, parent and pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andy Webster	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Shadick	Ofsted Inspector
David Bromfield	Ofsted Inspector
David Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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