

# Inspection of Gordon's School

Bagshot Road, West End, Woking, Surrey GU24 9PT

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Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Moss. This school is part of The Gordon's School Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Valner.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness 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. The school received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act on 17 October 2017. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to be members of Gordon's School. They fully embrace the school's vision of 'Better me, Better world'. Pupils thrive in response to the school's high ambitions. They learn about the importance of hard work, participation and making positive contributions to the community. These are reflected in pupils' responsible behaviour across the school. In lessons, they learn with enthusiasm. Pupils value the expertise of their teachers. They respond to their questions keenly and engage fully in class discussions. This supports all pupils to achieve highly.

The diverse school community is valued by pupils. Regardless of background, pupils happily thrive in the togetherness of Gordon's. Across the school, the successes of individuals are widely celebrated. Through the 'Honours Programme', pupils receive recognition for excellent conduct and for supporting the school. The ethos of promoting success supports pupils to develop confidence and to take pride in their achievements.

Pupils appreciate the extensive 'co-curricular' opportunities. These provide all pupils with chances to explore new interests and develop their talents. From debating societies to competing in team sports, there is something for everyone. In addition, a wide range of trips provide memorable experiences. Pupils appreciate how these broaden their horizons.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious across all subjects. The important knowledge is precisely arranged so that pupils build a strong understanding. This includes the deliberate coverage of additional, broader knowledge. This supports pupils to develop deep understanding of the big ideas within subjects. As a result, they confidently give rich explanations of their learning.

Students in the sixth form excel. They benefit from a broad range of ambitious courses within the study programmes. Through the 'Open Study' curriculum, students develop strong study skills. In Year 13, pupils develop informed views on important issues through the 'Liberal Arts' curriculum. Students value how these equip them with a deep understanding of the wider world. Throughout the sixth form, students explore future career options and qualifications. This is reflected in the clarity with which students in Year 13 talk about their post-18 choices.

Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They use this to provide clear explanations of complicated ideas. These are supported by well-chosen demonstrations that reinforce the key learning points. Teachers use discussions to help pupils deepen their understanding of important knowledge effectively. Consequently pupils, and students in the sixth form, explain challenging ideas clearly. Across lessons, teachers use a range of methods to check pupils' understanding effectively. They identify and promptly address when any pupils have an incorrect understanding. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are clearly identified. Pupils with SEND are taught well and progress through the planned curriculum.

There is a rich culture of reading. The exploration of diverse texts is woven through the curriculum. During tutor times, pupils regularly explore and discuss different texts with their teachers. The school identifies any pupils who struggle with reading and provides targeted extra sessions, which support them to catch up quickly.

Pupils' conduct is exemplary across the school. Staff consistently promote the school's high expectations. Pupils know these well and understand why upholding them matters. Across lessons, they work with focus and purpose. They enjoy grappling with new learning and tackling tricky problems. In discussions, pupils willingly share their ideas. Around the school, pupils are respectful, responsible and considerate of each other. If they can help anyone, they will. Sixth-form students act as role models for this conduct.

There is exceptional character development for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Pupils' horizons are broadened by the wealth of extra-curricular opportunities. Everyone tries new experiences. These help pupils to flourish, developing confidence alongside a broad range of skills. Pupils develop a real understanding of important issues in society. They have a deep understanding of diversity, fundamental British values and current world issues. They learn how to debate their views and ways they can support positive change. Pupils regularly experience taking responsibility. This is promoted through leadership opportunities and whole-school activities. This purposeful preparation for life in modern Britain includes a comprehensive careers education.

The school's clear vision and focus on success support all pupils in achieving well. The school identifies further areas for improvement. These include sharpening how well the school makes changes to the SEND register, where additional support for pupils with SEND is no longer required. When making such changes, the school makes sure these have sustained impact. Governors and trustees provide effective support and challenge. Staff enjoy working in the school. They appreciate the consideration given to their well-being. This supports them in teaching well.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139151
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341733
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	986
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	353
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jane Valner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Moss
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.gordons.school">www.gordons.school</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	17 and 18 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a stand-alone academy in the Gordon's School Academy Trust.
- The school provides boarding accommodation for some pupils.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives from the governors and trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, business studies, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed breaktime and lunchtime activities.
- 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 the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.

## Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Copeland	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Simmonds	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Reid	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Kearsley	Ofsted Inspector

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