

Inspection of Upton Court Grammar School

Lascelles Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 7PR

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 November 2022

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

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Upton Court Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Upton Court Grammar School to be outstanding before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school and actively commit to the core values of unity, curiosity, growth and service. Their behaviour is exemplary because of their positive attitudes and their dedication to education. Pupils are kind and actively support the well-being of other pupils. They create an environment in which differences are valued and celebrated. Pupils have high expectations of themselves in every aspect of their school life. Pupils are happy and safe. Rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Attendance is high, lateness is rare and exclusions infrequent. Pupils and students are highly motivated because of the high-quality teaching and extensive support for their personal development. Pupils and students speak very positively about their experience in the school. They are taught about equality and inclusion. They are able to discuss contentious issues from an informed perspective. Fundamental British values are highlighted through pupils' interactions with one another.

The breadth and scale of extra-curricular activities are exceptional covering sports, arts, speaking, reading, cooking and debating. All pupils participate in these opportunities, including pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, the range of trips, visits and talks is extensive and supports pupils' social and moral awareness, for example Holocaust education, charity events and theatre visits exploring themes of inclusion and intolerance.

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

Leaders have created an aspirational curriculum. It is carefully planned, boldly ambitious and thoughtfully implemented. It is meticulously sequenced across all years, including the sixth form. Content is precisely linked to the national curriculum and examination syllabuses. Pupils value the academic ethos, as well as the support for their personal development, welfare and well-being. All pupils study English, mathematics, science, humanities and a modern foreign language.

In the sixth form, senior leaders have a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. The sixth-form curriculum is ambitious and relevant. There are large numbers of A-level courses with further courses offered in conjunction with a neighbouring school. Courses are relevant to students' intended pathways. Significant numbers of students proceed to highly regarded universities of their choice.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are sensitively supported and achieve well. High-attaining pupils are given extension work and inspired to deepen their knowledge. The super curriculum allows them to pursue topics above and beyond curriculum requirements. Links with primary schools are managed well. Take-up and retention in the sixth form are extremely high.

Teachers are experts in their subjects and pupils appreciate their passion and enthusiasm. Research-based teaching is explicitly linked to prior learning with regular retrieval practice. Literacy and reading skills are well supported across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to meet authors, attend book clubs and take part in reading competitions.

The take up of creative subjects is relatively low. However, pupils have ample opportunities to engage through enrichment lessons and additional options in music, drama and art.

Assessment is regular, with detailed feedback to help pupils appreciate next steps. Pupils and students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

School leaders are committed to supporting all pupils to thrive and succeed. Character education is a significant strength of the school. Pupils speak positively about the ways in which the school helps them to develop as individuals. They identify ways in which the school contributes to their confidence, resilience and initiative.

A well-considered careers programme meets all requirements. The school makes excellent use of careers fairs, visiting speakers and alumni to support pupils in realising their career ambitions. The school prepares students particularly well for future success in education, employment and training.

The headteacher has an extremely strong understanding of his school. He is well known and much appreciated by students, staff and parents. Provision for pupils with SEND is effectively led, with wider support from across the trust. Leaders responsible for disadvantaged pupils have developed a coherent strategy shared across the school.

Self-evaluation is accurate. School improvement priorities are ambitious and resolutely focused on providing a world-class education. Leaders at all levels are supported through effective line management, coaching and training. Leaders take account of workload when reviewing school activities.

There is no complacency on the part of trustees and governors. They talk about pushing boundaries, and that is exactly what they do. They have a secure understanding of the school and actively hold leaders to account.

Senior leaders collaborate with the wider community in many ways. They run a comprehensive programme of training to enhance teachers' expertise. The school has excellent links with trust schools and works collaboratively with other schools.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have embedded a culture of safeguarding across the school. A safeguarding governor ensures procedures and practices are rigorously followed. Staff training is robust and promotes vigilance. Staff know what to do if they need to raise a concern. Actions are implemented in a timely way. External support is sought where appropriate.

Pupils talk with confidence about how the school teaches them to stay safe online. They are clear about how to raise concerns and confident that adults will act properly. Pupils know exactly what to do if they encounter any bullying. Pupils feel safe, happy and very well supported.

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	136420
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10227237
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,111
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	333
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Jervis
Headteacher	Mark Pritchard
Website	www.uptoncourtgrammar.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Upton Court Grammar School is an 11 to 18 co-educational selective grammar school which is part of the Pioneer Educational Trust. When the predecessor school was inspected in January 2008, it was judged to be outstanding.
- A small number of sixth-form students attend some of their A-level classes at a neighbouring grammar school.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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 first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, science, history, art and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke about the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, talked with subject teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff, students and pupils. They reviewed the single central record and considered safeguarding documentation, including staff records and employment checks.
- Inspectors looked at policies provided by the school and the trust. They studied curriculum documentation, exclusion statistics, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination statistics. The lead inspector met governors and trust leaders.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views and additional written comments provided by parents. They reviewed the survey returns and responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Reid	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Piper	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Cooksey	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Doherty	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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