

Inspection of Pate's Grammar School

Princess Elizabeth Way, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 0HG

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 March 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Dr James Richardson. This school is part of Pate's Grammar School single 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, co-chaired by Rebecca Flaxman and Heidi Binford.

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 under section 5 of the Act since April 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, including governors, have created a strong ethos at the school. There is a balance of high expectations and extensive support. As a selective school, pupils join with high prior attainment. However, staff and pupils are not complacent. Pupils work incredibly hard. They thrive academically and personally. This is underpinned by pupils' sense of responsibility to the school and community. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, leave Pate's as ambitious, compassionate and well-rounded individuals.

Pupils flourish in this nurturing environment. Relationships between staff and pupils are built on mutual respect. Pupils develop high levels of independence. They show resilience and persevere when faced with challenges. In this school everyone is accepted and cultural differences are celebrated. Parents are highly engaged in school life. They are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many say their child is thriving at Pate's.

The school provides pupils with an extensive range of enrichment in the form of extra-curricular activities and frequent trips. The rate of pupil participation in these opportunities is high. The house system is an integral part of the school. Pupils become leaders and act as role models to others. Pupils throughout the school aspire to become house officials. Inter-house activities are inclusive and celebrate success. Pupils also learn to be gracious in defeat.

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

Pupils at Pate's benefit from an exceptionally high quality of education. As a result, pupils in Year 11 and students in Year 13 achieve exceptional academic success in external examinations across all subjects of the curriculum. The school ensures pupils follow a broad range of subjects which are rich in quality. Many pupils study two or more modern foreign languages, for example. This extends beyond the mechanics of learning a language. Pupils also develop a deep appreciation of different countries and cultures.

Subject leaders have meticulously planned the knowledge they want pupils to learn. The sequence of this learning is thoughtful and successfully builds on pupils' prior knowledge. Teachers follow the 'Pate's Learning Framework' to question pupils and model examples. They use assessment skilfully to check what pupils know and remember. This informs future learning. As staff know pupils so well, they tailor learning to support pupils' needs, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils make excellent progress.

Pupils display consistently positive attitudes to their learning. They demonstrate a thirst for knowledge. Students in the sixth form make strong use of key terminology. They use this to articulate their understanding with a very high degree of confidence and expertise. Pupils are highly motivated to continue their learning beyond the classroom. Many also enjoy reading for pleasure. Pupils make good use of the junior

and senior libraries, for example. School activities, such as reading week and the sharing of published work from alumni, raise the profile of reading further.

Every part of the personal development offer is deliberately planned to meet the needs of pupils. The curriculum is carefully targeted to be appropriate and relevant to pupils as they get older. For example, pupils learn about financial budgeting in Year 7 and then re-visit this in Year 8 to learn more about how lifestyle choices may impact on future budgeting. Careful consideration is also given to the content of the sixth-form curriculum as many students join from other secondary providers.

There is an exceptional array of opportunities for pupils to pursue interests and develop talents. These include maths society, climbing club, British Sign Language Club, belonging to the Combined Cadet Force and a 3D printing club. Many of these are led by staff. Many more are instigated and led by pupils. During lunch time and after school, Pate's buzzes with activity. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, benefit hugely from these opportunities.

The school creates meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work. A large number of students in the sixth form go on to successful placements at university. Others are supported onto different paths, such as degree apprenticeships. Whatever their chosen destination, pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

The school is highly inclusive. There are only very rare examples of derogatory language which are addressed immediately and do not get repeated. Pupils behave well because they know it is the right thing to do. School leaders carefully scrutinise attendance and punctuality. It is consistently high because pupils want to be in school.

Leaders, including governors, are passionate about ensuring Pate's is the best it can be. They invest in staff and provide an outstanding professional development programme. Therefore, staff feel valued and are highly committed to their roles.

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

Unique reference number	136353
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10307251
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	1253
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	501
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Co-chairs of trust	Rebecca Flaxman and Heidi Binford
Headteacher	Dr James Richardson
Website	www.patesgs.org
Date of previous inspection	25 and 26 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school is part of Pate's Grammar School single academy trust.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school does not 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

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator, subject leaders, and members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector
Nic Blunsum	Ofsted Inspector
Sandy Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Kerr	Ofsted Inspector

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