

The Judd School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118843
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291271
Inspection date	25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline White HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School	933
6th form	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Seymour-Ure
Headteacher	Robert Masters
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2001
School address	Brook Street Tonbridge TN9 2PN
Telephone number	01732 770880
Fax number	01732 771661

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out in one day by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Judd School is a selective school with specialist status in music and mathematics. Girls are admitted in Year 12 and make up about 16 per cent of the sixth form. Almost all students go on to higher education. Many come from relatively affluent backgrounds, though this is not universal; very few take up free school meals. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average as is the number of students with a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This excellent school ensures outstanding outcomes for the overwhelming majority of its students. Parents place a high value on the school's commitment to academic excellence and providing students with an extensive range of extra activities. Students enter the school with standards that are well above average and continue with excellent achievement as they progress through each key stage.

The school is a purposeful, vibrant place where everyone's right to learn is respected. Staff and governors are unified in expecting high standards and the best possible opportunities for every child.

Student attitudes are very positive as demonstrated by their excellent attendance. They enjoy and benefit from the rich range of additional activities available to them. Outstanding personal development helps them to mature as thoughtful citizens with a sense of responsibility for the local and wider community. Students are increasingly encouraged to express opinions about their school and the contribution they make to ensuring it is a supportive and successful place of learning.

The excellent curriculum caters well for the interests and needs of students. The school recognises the importance of preparing students for the rapidly changing context of the 21st century and is developing courses and skills that will enable them to rise to the challenges of the future. Governors and senior leaders are outward looking. They work to develop lifelong learners not only within the school but within the wider community too. For example, a programme aptly entitled 'Aspirations' invites primary students and teachers from three local schools to share learning experiences alongside Judd staff and students.

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Strong relationships support a culture of success. Whilst teaching and learning are excellent overall, the school recognises the need to develop students as flexible, independent learners by introducing a wider variety of teaching and learning styles. In addition, to make certain all students are fully stretched, the systems for tracking progress and using the information to extend students' learning in lessons are being developed.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, appointed in September 2004, provides excellent leadership. He is perceptive, honest and open in his evaluation of the school's strengths and areas of development. His clear vision underpins the school's excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are excellent. The first-rate care and guidance provided for students support learning and give every individual the opportunity of realising their potential. Sixth formers are excellent role models for other students and make an important contribution to the positive, caring atmosphere of the school. Excellent teaching results in most students making outstanding progress and achieving standards well above the national average. The curriculum, whilst academically based, is wide-ranging and encourages the development of broader skills such as critical thinking. Outstanding leadership is very responsive to the needs of students. Consequently, recruitment and retention are excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

Establish the systems for tracking students' progress in every area of the curriculum and ensure that all teachers use this information to challenge students fully in lessons.

Continue to develop a wider variety of teaching and learning styles to extend students' thinking skills and provide more opportunities for independent learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Students consistently reach standards well above the national average or national expectations by the end of Years 9, 11 and 13. Standards and achievement in the sixth form are particularly impressive with students making outstanding progress in most subjects.

The school has succeeded in meeting increasingly challenging targets with younger students performing exceptionally well in mathematics. There are no significant differences in the progress of various groups of learners, particularly since students in danger of underachieving or who are less confident in basic skills are given extensive mentoring and other support. The school is rightly increasing flexibility for students by introducing early entry for some national tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school is very successful in helping students develop as mature, responsible individuals who are loyal to the school whilst being constructively critical in evaluating how they, and the school, can keep moving forward.

Relationships are excellent and students enjoy responsibility, although some are sceptical about the effectiveness of the school council. They welcome the opportunity to help each other, for example through mentoring. Attendance is well above average, and attitudes towards learning are very positive.

Students value the excellent range and quality of enrichment activities which enable them to explore their potential and develop outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They also have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and talk enthusiastically about changes in canteen provision and the opportunities for sport.

Students are very well prepared for the next stage of education and life. Taking advantage of opportunities for work experience, voluntary service and joining the combined cadet force they grow into articulate and thoughtful members of the wider community with a strong commitment to making a positive contribution.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Overall, teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers know their subjects very well and most enjoy excellent relationships with students. However, the leaders responsible for driving the improvement of teaching and learning are not complacent. They have a clear vision of how to build on the school's strengths to ensure that students are excited and stretched by learning. Their vision is evident in the most successful lessons where students are required to think at the highest level, take a lead, participate in tasks and evaluate their learning. There is a variety of engaging activities matched to individual needs with well chosen questions designed to test and deepen understanding. In contrast, some lessons are over directed by teachers who miss opportunities to challenge students and develop their capacity to learn independently.

The school is aware the small size of some classrooms constrains the choice of teaching and learning styles. Governors and senior leaders are rightly seeking to redevelop the learning environment for the subjects affected so they enjoy the same standard of accommodation as the areas that have been improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. It succeeds in motivating students highly. A particular strength is music provision. There is a very extensive range of musical activities, which sometimes include parents and students from other schools. The school is also innovative in developing music projects in conjunction with other subjects such as French and English. The school's specialist status has been used both to give music a high priority throughout the school and to provide support elsewhere, for example in local primary schools. Students value the well developed personal, social, moral and health education programme. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the previous inspection and students enjoy good access to computers.

The school's excellent links with other institutions ensure students make a good transition between different phases of education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Overall, the quality of support, care and guidance for students is outstanding. Strengths reside in the quality of pastoral support extended to all students including the small number of vulnerable students or those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Through initiatives such as peer mentoring and close contact with home, these students are given the means and motivation to achieve well. Students are confident that any personal concerns will be well dealt with by staff. Sixth form students benefit from the high quality of information they receive about further and higher education. Some students feel guidance about how they improve their work could be more precise.

The school uses outside agencies to support students' learning well. Child protection procedures are secure and robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The newly formed senior leadership team is gaining experience and establishing itself. However, it provides good support to the headteacher and subject and pastoral leaders. Senior support staff make an important contribution to the efficient management of the school's finances and administration.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher has secured significant improvements. Leaders and teams across the school are implementing a more systematic approach to improvement planning. Self-evaluation is well founded with a clear focus on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Both the professional development and accountability of all staff are given a high priority. There is an appropriate focus on developing leadership at all levels with more work to do in sharing the very best practice across all pastoral and subject teams.

The governing body is well led. Governors are involved in the life of the school and its strategic direction. They are astute, well informed and effective in supporting and challenging those charged with responsibility for implementation. Since its previous inspection, which did not identify any major areas for improvement, the school has demonstrated excellent capacity for improvement by extending the systems for evaluating the work of the school, raising awareness of teaching methods that are responsive to different learning styles, giving a higher profile to pastoral leaders and their work and enhancing facilities by improving the school buildings.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 April 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The Judd School, Brook Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2PN

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciated your openness and cooperation. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection. Your parents or carers will have a copy of the full report should you wish to read it.

The inspection found that yours is an outstanding school that is well led. There is an excellent range of courses available to you. We agree there is an exceptionally wide choice of extra activities that help you to develop as well-rounded, confident young people with excellent life opportunities.

You enjoy excellent lessons that help you to achieve consistently high standards in national tests and examinations. Relationships between you and your teachers are strong and you say you feel safe and valued. Staff and governors are ambitious for you and ensure you have excellent care and support. You are rightly proud of the achievements of the school and realise you play a powerful part in making the school a purposeful and successful place.

Your school is always striving to improve and, to this end, staff are developing the systems for tracking your progress and using the information to make sure you are stretched in lessons. They will also continue to introduce a variety of teaching and learning methods to inspire you to think hard at the highest level and mature as lifelong, independent learners.

Finally, we want you to know that we were impressed with your willingness to take responsibility and your enthusiasm for learning. You make an essential contribution not only to the success of your school but to the advancement of the wider community too. Keep up the excellent work!

With very best wishes for the future,

Jacqueline White Her Majesty's Inspector