

Inspection of The Judd School

Brook Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2PN

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
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 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 May 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at The Judd School. They enjoy a first-class curriculum and an exceptional range of enrichment experiences. The values of 'learn, grow, belong' underpin school life. As a result, pupils become intellectually curious, rise to academic challenges and develop excellent wider skills that prepare them well for life. They are rightly proud of their outstanding academic success and personal achievements.

Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Their conduct reflects the school's ethos of respect, where diversity is welcomed and celebrated. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are very strong. Pupils joining the school, whether in Year 7 or the sixth form, enjoy a warm and supportive community. Pupils thrive in the school's house system, which provides them with a caring, nurturing environment and a strong sense of identity. As a result, pupils feel very safe and happy in school.

The school is exemplary in the way it develops pupils' leadership skills. For example, sixth-form students lead clubs and subject clinics for younger pupils to help them catch up with their learning. Pupils lead assemblies and learn how to debate issues. House competitions are frequently organised by pupils. There is a thriving Combined Cadet Force and high numbers of pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

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

The school offers a rich and varied curriculum that inspires pupils at every stage of their education. It is carefully designed to build complexity from ambitious starting points. The range of subjects on offer is impressive. For example, pupils study French, German and Latin in key stage 3. The English Baccalaureate is at the heart of the key stage 4 curriculum. Pupils supplement this with choices from a range of creative subjects and some more unusual ones, such as Greek and ancient history. All sixth-form students study four subjects from a varied menu.

Teachers are specialists in their subjects. They demonstrate a deep passion and knowledge for what they teach. The school ensures that staff benefit from high-quality professional development. Teachers design sequences of lessons to build on prior learning and stimulate discussion and debate. As a result, pupils not only aspire to examination success, but they also develop deep insights into their subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils use ambitious vocabulary in their work. They use probing questions to check pupils' understanding and swiftly address any misconceptions. Consequently, pupils and sixth-form students achieve exceptionally well.

Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive effective help from staff that know their needs well. This includes those in the specially resourced provision, who thrive with a carefully designed mix of mainstream lessons and individual support. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND achieve impressive outcomes.

Pupils arrive at the school with highly developed reading skills. These are further developed through the school's promotion of reading for pleasure. The well-stocked library is a warm and welcoming space and valued by pupils. Many pupils cultivate a deep passion for reading and make it a regular part of their lives.

The school's 'learn, grow, belong' programme expertly develops pupils' understanding of social and cultural issues. From Year 7 to Year 13, pupils are encouraged to be curious and reflective about the wider world. Expert staff teach pupils about sensitive issues, such as healthy relationships and consent. Pupils learn how to improve their own mental health and how to seek support. They understand how to stay safe online and are encouraged to challenge or report things that concern them.

The school offers a dazzling array of extra-curricular opportunities. These inspire a diverse range of interests and skills. Pupils enthuse about the range of sporting clubs, dramatic and musical productions, trips, visiting speakers and foreign exchanges that are available. There are numerous clubs, such as medical society, potions club and young engineers. Pupils know they are lucky to have such dedicated staff. The school ensures that it offers help to disadvantaged pupils to remove financial barriers to participation.

Careers guidance is excellent, equipping pupils with a comprehensive understanding of future options. Insights into inspirational careers are woven into the academic curriculum and begin from an early age. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enriching experiences, such as careers fairs, world of work days and work experience placements. These opportunities ensure that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in life. Most go on to prestigious universities or high-quality apprenticeships.

Pupils' exceptionally positive experiences at school means that attendance is high. They are eager to attend lessons and highly motivated to succeed. Pupils who may, on occasion, struggle to attend, are well supported to overcome any barriers.

Leaders are unwavering in their ambition for all pupils and promote a clear, values-driven vision for the school. Governors provide effective support and challenge to ensure the school fulfils this vision. Leaders' attention to detail ensures that all pupils benefit from their work. Staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. As one parent said, 'Judd is an incredibly compassionate school that understands its pupils and gives them every opportunity to be the best that they can be.'

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	118843
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341526
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,497
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	541
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugo Brown
Headteacher	Jonathan Wood
Website	www.judd.online
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 May 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary aided school supported by The Skinners' Company.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for 22 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.
- 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 (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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and 11 members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector had a telephone call with the local authority representative.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, 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 spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential online staff survey. They took account of the responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. Inspectors considered the views of pupils shared in the confidential online pupil survey and through discussions held with pupils throughout the school.

Inspection team

Paula Sargent, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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