

Torquay Boys' Grammar School

Address: Shiphay Manor Drive, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 7EL

Unique reference number (URN): 136321

Inspection report: 24 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve highly at this school. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes, most notably at key stage 4. In some subjects, GCSE outcomes have been significantly above national averages for a number of years. Pupils who are disadvantaged often achieve significantly above disadvantaged pupils nationally and make strong progress from their starting points. A high number of students achieve the highest grades at key stage 5. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education, often winning places at prestigious universities.

In addition, pupils talk with confidence about what they have learned, using a range of sophisticated vocabulary. Pupils enjoy using their knowledge to discuss and debate ideas and to apply what they have learned in new and creative contexts, such as writing poems about the industrial revolution in key stage 3 history or working in groups to hypothesise and experiment in A-level chemistry.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils' attendance is high. This is because they feel a strong sense of belonging and pride in their school. In addition, the school has ensured there is strong pastoral support for the few pupils for whom attending regularly has been more difficult. This work has had a positive impact. For example, the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved significantly over the last 3 years.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Learning is very rarely disrupted because pupils have highly positive attitudes towards school and positive relationships with staff. At social times, pupils conduct themselves well, without the need for staff intervention. They are respectful and polite. Pupils have confidence that staff will address any issues of behaviour which do not meet the school's expectations. The school is proactive in promoting positive behaviour, for example through its 'active bystander' project, which has included outreach work with local primary schools. This supports pupils to become positive role models, both in school and beyond.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Staff know pupils very well. They quickly and accurately identify any barriers to learning that pupils may face, whether they be special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or challenges linked to mental health and wellbeing. The school has strengthened its pastoral care. Pupils value the access they have to the school counsellor and the support they receive from their heads of house. Staff have received appropriate training that has supported their understanding of different SEND. This means they understand how and when to raise concerns with the special educational needs coordinator.

Leaders are tenacious when seeking external help and support. They work highly effectively with families to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum and all that the school has to offer. Pupils who experience financial disadvantage receive the support they need to thrive.

Leaders carefully review their work to support vulnerable pupils, making adaptations where needed. As a result, over time, pupils with SEND and other pupils who are disadvantaged have attended more regularly and have achieved increasingly well.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The breadth and ambition of the school's curriculum is a strength. In nearly all subjects, there is a clear sequence of learning that enables pupils, and students in the sixth form, to build increasingly complex knowledge over time and make connections within and between subjects. Pupils and parents value the opportunity to study more unusual subjects, such as Chinese and Japanese. Students in the sixth form are able to take the International Baccalaureate.

Leaders have prioritised high-quality talk and creativity. This is evident in lessons much of the time. Where this works well, teachers skilfully facilitate thought-provoking discussions among pupils, which helps to deepen pupils' understanding of subject-specific concepts. Teachers are subject experts and passionate advocates for their subject areas. The school successfully promotes a love of reading.

However, teaching is not consistently effective. At times, teachers do not check for pupils' understanding in lessons. Pupils do not always receive feedback or have the opportunity to correct and improve their work. While some pupils are highly engaged in their learning, others are more passive recipients of information. Leaders know where teaching is weaker and have taken action to address this, but a more rigorous approach is needed to ensure teaching is of consistently high quality.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a highly ambitious vision for the school. Governors and trustees support and challenge leaders to ensure this vision is fully realised. They have identified areas of the school that need to improve, including ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high quality. However, the systems in place to ensure these improvements happen sometimes lack rigour and precision. The quality of teaching is not reviewed regularly or robustly enough to ensure that pockets of weaker practice are addressed effectively.

The professional learning programme is wide-ranging and includes the development of coaching, research-informed practice and working parties. The programme has ensured that staff feel involved in the school's strategic direction. Staff engage positively with this work, but it has not yet led to consistently effective practice in the classroom. They report high levels of support for their workload and wellbeing. This includes those at the early stages of their career and the high number of staff who have worked at the school for many years.

Governors and trustees understand their statutory duties, including in relation to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others who are disadvantaged. They

support the school to make decisions in the best interests of all pupils. For example, they have supported the school to strengthen its pastoral provision.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. The school has prioritised pupils' mental health and wellbeing. As a result, pupils feel well cared for and talk about this provision positively and openly. Pupils' engagement in ethical debates is also a strength. This is delivered in part through the school's philosophy and ethics course, where pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values and read thought-provoking and challenging texts. This curriculum is supplemented by talks from visiting speakers and additional lunchtime clubs. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe both online and offline.

Many pupils take on leadership roles, including as house captains and prefects in the sixth form, as well as leaders for wellbeing and equality and diversity. Pupils are actively engaged in the democratic process. Students in the sixth form are excellent role models for younger pupils, taking on roles as tutors and mentors.

The extra-curricular provision is extensive. There is a wide range of clubs and activities on offer, including regular lunchtime clubs, ranging from fantasy games to sports to music. Talented musicians lead the school's ensembles. The annual musical is a highlight of the school calendar. The school ensures there is something for everyone. For example, the school is taking part in a national horticulture project.

The careers programme has been strengthened recently. For example, the school has invested in a digital programme which enables pupils to learn about higher education and possible careers. The school is starting to make links with local employers to support pupils' understanding of the labour market. Pupils enjoy attending the careers fair. The school ensures that pupils in key stages 3 and 4 learn about the world of work, but these encounters are not wide-ranging for all. For example, there is no expectation that pupils in key stage 4 will undertake work experience. Careers education is more well established in the sixth form. Students are very well supported with their applications and preparation for university.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

The 16-19 study programme is well designed for the high aspirations of students. The sixth-form curriculum is broad. The school has a positive reputation for its delivery of the International Baccalaureate, and students who take this course typically do very well. In addition, students taking A levels often achieve a suite of high grades. However, other published outcomes are closer to national averages, including the progress that students typically make from their starting points. Where there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching generally, these are also apparent in the sixth form. Students who face barriers to learning value the support they receive from staff.

All students take part in a programme to develop their work-related skills. It gives them an opportunity to visit local schools and to take part in group tasks and in one-to-one interviews with local employers. Students are well prepared for the next stage of education,

employment or training. The vast majority of students choose to go on to university and achieve their first choice, including prestigious placements in the United States of America. Students who choose alternative routes, such as apprenticeships, are also well supported.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Torquay Boys' Grammar School feel safe, known and valued. They benefit from warm relationships with staff, who know them well and who are quick to notice when extra help is needed. Pupils say there are trusted adults they can talk to. Parents are highly positive about the support their children receive. As a result, pupils feel a strong sense of belonging.

Pupils behave with maturity and respect. They move calmly around the site and show consistently positive attitudes to learning. Instances of poor behaviour and bullying are very rare, and pupils say that these are dealt with promptly and fairly.

Pupils enjoy a rich curriculum and speak confidently about their learning. They benefit from ambitious subject choices, creative opportunities and encouragement to read for pleasure. Older pupils discuss complex ideas with assurance, and many take up leadership roles. Although some variability remains in the consistency of teaching, pupils generally achieve very well and published outcomes are strong. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and typically make progress in line with their peers.

Pupils experience a wide range of enrichment activities, including international visits, clubs and house activities. Music, sports, drama and ethical debates are part of pupils' diet here. They take part enthusiastically, knowing that staff encourage everyone to get involved. Attendance is high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school and leaders' belief that school should be 'irresistible' and 'unmissable'.

Next steps

- Leaders should rigorously monitor the impact of their improvement work to ensure that this leads to consistently strong standards across all areas of the school.
 - Leaders should embed a consistently high-quality approach to formative assessment across all subjects. Teachers must use assessment information precisely and routinely to check pupils' understanding, identify emerging misconceptions and adapt teaching responsively.
 - Leaders should increase opportunities for younger pupils to engage directly and meaningfully with employers so that they develop a deeper understanding of the world of work and the pathways available to them after school.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Torquay Boys' Grammar School Trust, which includes this school and one other. The headteacher of this school is also the accounting officer of the trust, which is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christine Weston.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and groups of staff. The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the board of trustees, as well as members of the local governing body.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Since the previous inspection, there is a new headteacher, who started their role in September 2024.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Dr James Hunt

Lead inspector:

Victoria Griffin, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Iain Freeland, Ofsted Inspector

Robert Coles, Ofsted Inspector

Tom Hill, Ofsted Inspector

Mike Foley, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,100

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,160

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

5.93%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.55%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

2.18%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	93.4%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89.1%	45.9%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	89.0%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	70.8	46.0	Above
2023/24 (final)	66.9	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	66.2	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.34	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.23	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	90.9%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	77.8%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85.7%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	65.8	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	63.8	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	64.3	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.23	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.41	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	90.9%	53.1%	37.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	77.8%	53.1%	24.7 pp
2022/23 (final)	85.7%	52.4%	33.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	65.8	50.4	15.4
2023/24 (final)	63.8	50.0	13.8
2022/23 (final)	64.3	50.3	14.0

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.23	0.16	0.06
2022/23 (final)	0.41	0.17	0.25

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	98%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	97%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	99%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.57	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.65	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.83	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.8%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	6.1%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	18.8%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.5%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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