THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Towards 300

1732 - 2032

Independent Schools Inspectorate Report 2025








PGS
CORE
CURIOSITY
CREATIVITY
COMMITMENT
COURAGE
COMPASSION
COLLABORATION

PGS has a “highly supportive and inspiring learning environment”, there is “strong academic performance”, teachers provide “tailored feedback” and there are “warm, supportive and caring relationships.” Pupils know right from wrong” and “are keen to take responsibility for themselves and for others”. “The pupil is the starting point.”

These are just some of the comments that we heard from the ISI Inspection Team that came to visit us in September 2025. I am pleased they recognised the excellent work that occurs every day around the school, that they saw a school where everyone strives for success whilst supporting each other and witnessed many of the extensive opportunities that exist outside of the classroom. Our staff, whether they be in the Pre-School or the Sixth Form, work closely with our pupils to nurture success, whatever shape that takes for each individual. Our pupils work together in class, on the sports pitch, on the stage, in the concert hall and in the local community supporting others.

As you will see in the findings of this inspection, it is noted that “The school’s core values promote pupils’ wellbeing effectively. These values underpin the school’s positive atmosphere in which pupils flourish academically and enjoy the many opportunities available to them.” This is at the core of what we aim to achieve at The Portsmouth Grammar School, and we are achieving this.



What follows is a brief summary of the comments made by the inspection team and what is contained in the final written report. I hope that you enjoy reading them.

I am conscious that our school community includes the families and carers of our students. I would like to extend my thanks to them as well as the dedicated staff at the school and, of course, to the pupils, who make this such an exceptional place. We will continue to work to serve them, to ensure that we remain an academically ambitious, caring community that supports them as individuals and prepares them for the world that lies ahead of them.

Together, we are PGS.

David Wickes
Head of The Portsmouth Grammar School

Inspection: The Details

The Portsmouth Grammar School was visited over two and a half days, from 23 - 25 September 2025. The inspection covered the whole school from Pre-School to Sixth Form and was conducted by a team of 8 inspectors.

The inspection activities included:

- lesson observations
- observations of registration and assemblies
- observations of co-curricular activities as timetabled over those days
- discussions with the Chair and other governors
- discussions with the Head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to Learning Support and PE facilities
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of policies, documentation and records
- consideration of the responses to the pupils, staff and parent surveys conducted

The Inspectors looked at 5 key standards:

- Leadership and management, and governance
- Quality of education, training and recreation
- Pupils' physical and mental health, and wellbeing
- Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society
- Safeguarding

In the new inspection framework, there is no longer a grading system, it is simply a case of whether standards are met, or not.

The inspection concluded that all of the standards are met.



Leadership and management, and governance

Inspectors evaluated the impact of leadership at all levels in the school. They considered how leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge and how they fulfil their responsibilities.



- "Leaders create an environment in which pupils are happy, intellectually curious and creative in a school which values compassion and collaboration."
- "From their starting point in the early years, every pupil is known as an individual. The motivational and supportive early years setting, for example, allows children to explore their interests successfully. Pupils from Pre-School to Senior School are encouraged to develop their interests and aspirations."
- "Governors are effective in their quality assurance of all aspects of the school's work."
- "Leaders ensure that teaching does not discriminate against pupils and that diversity is promoted throughout the school."



Quality of education, training and recreation

This forms a prominent part of the inspection process. The inspectors look to ensure that the pupils' education and experience of the curriculum, as well as the school's teaching and learning culture, meet the needs of all pupils such that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.



- "Pupils achieve well over their time in the school."
- "The curriculum is age-appropriate and tailored to pupils' aptitudes and needs, with a focus on personalised pathways and learning."
- The inspectors noted that "pupils engage with their learning" and "make progress through effective teaching."
- "Teachers use questioning techniques effectively to deepen pupils' understanding."
- "In the Pre-School, high quality daily interactions and structured activities underpin children's confident use of communication and language."
- The inspectors said, "the thematic curriculum in the Junior School is both innovative and exciting."



- "Departments in the Senior School achieve the strategic intent of delivering a curriculum to meet individual pupils' need. Regular assessment, with supportive feedback from teachers, means that pupils understand how to improve their work. This gives pupils confidence that they are on the right track."
- "The use of digital technology is embedded in the curriculum. ...[Pupils] know that technology is used to supplement rather than substitute thinking."
- "Pupils build on secure foundations of knowledge and skills. They develop independence, intellectual curiosity and good subject knowledge. As a result, they are well motivated and eager to learn."

Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

Inspectors ensure that the school encourages mutual trust and respect for other people, develops pupils' spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding, promotes the development of pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. They also check that pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress in physical, personal and health education and that there is good behaviour management.





- "The school's core values are curiosity, creativity, commitment, courage, compassion and collaboration. These values underpin the promotion of pupils' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The school places strong emphasis on physical development and wellbeing through a variety of activities."
- "The values of compassion, curiosity and resilience are well embedded. These values are integral to the Pastoral Curriculum."
- "The Junior School works closely with parents to ensure that pupils' physical development supports their overall academic progress."
- "In the Senior School, a broad range of sports and physical activities are offered. These activities promote physical fitness, as well as contributing to pupils' overall emotional wellbeing through opportunities for teamwork, leadership and personal growth."
- "In the Sixth Form the Community, Action, Workplace options encourage pupils' mutual respect for individual differences and empathy. These values are positively reflected across the school."
- "Leadership opportunities across all year groups allow pupils to contribute meaningfully to school life. They readily give their time to support others."

Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society.

This ensures pupils experience human, social and economic education which encourages respect for other people, promotes British values, develops pupils' social and cultural knowledge and understanding and gives Senior School pupils up-to-date careers guidance to enable them to fulfil their potential.





- "Pupils develop social awareness, respect for diversity and an understanding of fundamental British values through pastoral programmes, assemblies and societies."
- "Leaders set high expectations of how pupils interact with others. This results in a calm and caring environment."
- "The Junior School children apply themselves with commitment because they see the relevance of their studies in today's world. Through exposure to 'big questions', cultural stories and thematic projects, pupils are encouraged to link their learning to wider societal issues."
- "Sixth Form pupils access preparation for life after school through the Ignite programme. These experiences prepare pupils to lead meaningful, responsible and outward-looking lives within and beyond school."
- "The school's relationship with the city is valued."
- "Staff promote awareness of and respect for individual differences through assemblies and societies. Pupils discuss and appreciate others' viewpoints. Leaders ensure that diversity is celebrated and that dialogue is respectful. Pupils are supported to explore individual differences in a balanced way."

Safeguarding

The inspection ensures that the leadership of the school have in place arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils that meet national requirements. The inspectors probe and evaluate evidence carefully and robustly, informed by statutory guidance.





- "Staff know pupils well. They are confident to identify potential concerns quickly. Consequently, risks are managed well and pupils are protected from harm."
- "Across the school, staff demonstrate a risk-aware and responsive safeguarding culture."
- "The Safeguarding Team has a strong understanding of safeguarding and risk management. They work closely with external agencies and understand local referral thresholds. External advice is sought promptly when needed."
- "Governors are highly committed to keeping children safe."
- "The school maintains thorough and meticulous confidential records which are regularly scrutinised and monitored for trends."
- "Pupils know they are safe and that their views are valued."





THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The full report is available on the school website:
www.pgs.org.uk/about-us/policies-reports/reports-reviews