

Inspection of Dover Grammar School for Girls

Frith Road, Dover, Kent CT16 2PZ

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
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 November 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Dover Grammar School for Girls provides an inclusive, welcoming and ambitious environment for all pupils and sixth-form students. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is high. The school's values of 'building character, fostering respect, achieving success' permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has for their achievement.

There is a caring and supportive ethos throughout the school. Staff ensure that help is available if pupils need it. There is a clear focus on mental well-being. As a result, relationships are very strong between pupils and staff. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school site. They are polite, friendly and considerate.

The school offers a broad range of opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests, including a school magazine and an array of sports and performing arts clubs. Sixth-form students are fine ambassadors for the school. They have leadership roles in the school council and the house system and act as subject mentors for younger pupils.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school's work. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter is thriving at Dover Grammar School for Girls. I am very happy with her school experience.'

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

There are high aspirations for the pupils and sixth-form students at Dover Grammar School for Girls. The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. In most subjects, the learning is designed well. The school has considered the most important topics to study in the best order. This enables pupils to build their knowledge and skills over time.

In the majority of subjects, the curriculum is delivered well. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They create positive learning environments in the classroom and present information clearly to pupils. Teachers select appropriate tasks and resources to support pupils' learning in lessons. Revisiting content ensures that pupils remember important ideas well. Most teachers are skilled at checking for pupils' understanding.

Pupils try hard in class and take pride in their work. They routinely produce high-quality work. In some lessons, teachers promote appropriate discussion to enable pupils to talk about their ideas before completing their written work. This helps pupils to be more engaged with the learning, build confidence in their answers and develop their oracy skills. However, appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught is not promoted in all lessons.

Sixth-form students, including those new to the school, receive high-quality care and education. They benefit from an academic curriculum that is taught well. Students appreciate staff's expertise and the strong relationships they build with them. They enjoy

the challenge of their A-level lessons. They talk with confidence and insight about their learning.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Adults know pupils well as individuals. Teachers have detailed knowledge about the support pupils with SEND need. Teachers use this to adapt learning appropriately when pupils need it.

Reading has a central importance throughout the school, including in the sixth form. Any pupils who need help with reading are identified and supported well. A culture of reading for pleasure is nurtured. The school invites authors and poets to visit to inspire pupils. Younger pupils are introduced to a wide range of engaging books which cover diverse cultures and experiences. Sixth-form students read widely to enhance their A-level courses.

The school's well-constructed personal, social, health and economic education programme helps pupils learn about themselves, their communities and the wider world. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the personal characteristics protected by law and the importance of respecting others' differences. They are taught to stay safe and healthy. Assemblies, tutor time and many lessons successfully raise pupils' awareness of social, moral and cultural issues. The school has started a student-led 'equality, diversity and inclusion council' where pupils and sixth-form students have the opportunity to discuss and debate issues.

The school's programme for careers information, advice and guidance is high quality. Sixth-form students learn about a range of careers, apprenticeships and university courses. Pupils and students are well prepared for their next steps.

This school is well led. Governors and school leaders work together to identify priorities for the school's future development. Leaders are aware of, and sensitive to, staff's workload and well-being. Staff appreciate the professional development they receive and know their work is valued. They feel well supported and are happy and proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Appropriate exploration around the subject matter being taught is not promoted in all lessons. This means pupils do not always get the chance to deepen their understanding, engage fully in the learning or rehearse their thinking before writing. The school should share the good practice that exists across the school so it becomes the norm.

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	118806
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341523
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	869
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Buckman
Headteacher	Daniel Quinn
Website	www.dggs.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2024.
- 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 school uses two registered alternative provisions for pupils.

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 (early years and/or 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, a range of staff, pupils, and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and photography and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. A range of lessons in other subjects were also visited.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at break- and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about behaviour and their workload.
- An inspector held a telephone discussion with a member of staff at two alternative provisions.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s 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 Ofsted’s online pupil survey and through discussions held with pupils throughout the school.

Inspection team

Ann Fearon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Eliot Hodges	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Lawson	Ofsted Inspector

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