

Inspection of a good school: Dover Grammar School for Boys

Astor Avenue, Dover, Kent CT17 0DQ

Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

Outcome

Dover Grammar School for Boys continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They like the opportunities available to them beyond the subjects they study. Many pupils are involved in national programmes to develop their leadership skills. They feel safe in school and well supported by the adults who teach and look after them. Most parents are similarly positive about all aspects of the school. One parent reflected the views of many with their comment, 'The school is extremely caring.'

Leaders and staff have the highest expectations for pupils' behaviour. Because of this, pupils behave very well. They respect each other and the work staff do to support them to learn. Pupils say bullying rarely occurs. If it does, they are very confident that staff will promptly sort things out for them.

Pupils learn about a wide range of subjects. Sixth-form students learn well within a culture of professional respect and high ambition. Leaders have developed a curriculum that builds pupils' character and resilience around established school values. As a result, pupils develop maturity and independence well.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils study a wide range of academic, creative and other subjects. More pupils study a modern foreign language than in the past. Leaders have also made sure that more pupils study creative and technical subjects such as design technology, music, art and design or media studies than in recent years.

Teachers plan what pupils are taught in a logical and sequenced order. For most pupils this works well to help them build on their prior knowledge. However, leaders' work to check that disadvantaged pupils learn well across subjects is not effective enough. Leaders do not have a full picture of what works well to help the disadvantaged pupils develop their knowledge and skills further.

Most teachers use the information they are given about pupils with special educational

needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to help plan work that helps the pupils learn more. Teachers know the needs of pupils with SEND well. However, leaders need to confirm that teachers are consistently adapting the curriculum well enough to support the pupils' needs fully.

Teachers use different ways to check that pupils understand the topics or skills being taught. In some subjects these checks are very effective. For example, in Spanish the skilful use of questions by teachers helps pupils learn and remember well. Nevertheless, checks made on pupils' learning by teachers do not always make sure pupils understand well enough.

Leaders have developed an effective culture of learning in the sixth form. Students are strong ambassadors for the school, reflecting this positive ethos well. Leaders ensure that pupils are directed wisely to choose the courses that fit their needs best in the sixth form or other 16 to 19 providers. Students talk about their learning confidently. For example, physics A-level students spoke about their knowledge of gravity with an inspector. They explained accurately how they could use this to understand scientific information collected on an Apollo space mission.

Pupils enjoy the varied sporting clubs on offer, such as handball and rugby. They value the music clubs at lunchtime. Other pupils enjoy the newly introduced whole-school drama productions. Many pupils are involved in national schemes such as the combined cadet force and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Most Year 11 pupils have signed up for the national citizen service. Through such activities, pupils are taught about leadership and responsibility well.

Pupils behave very well in lessons. They listen to their teachers and other staff respectfully. They are polite with each other and adults in the school. They know that they will be helped by adults if they have any concerns. Pupils can take part in peer support and coaching schemes if they want or need.

Staff feel highly valued. They feel listened to by leaders. Staff are often asked to contribute their ideas to policy changes being made by leaders. Staff enjoy working at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there are clear, well-developed systems to ensure that pupils' safety is the highest priority for all. Well-trained leaders are up to date with their legal responsibilities, which they carry out effectively.

Leaders, governors and staff know how and when to report any concerns they have about pupils' safety or welfare. Concerns are dealt with efficiently by the appropriate leaders, such as the heads of year and support managers. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about national and local information that might affect their personal safety and welfare. Pupils are well informed about such issues.

Governors fulfil their safeguarding duties well. They make regular checks on the school's systems to confirm that the procedures remain effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Most teachers plan and check how disadvantaged pupils learn across their subjects. However, leaders do not have an accurate view of what works well to support disadvantaged pupils in the school. They do not have a clear enough understanding of where provision is strong and where it is less so. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum better supports disadvantaged pupils to develop the skills and knowledge that they need to succeed in the future.
- Sometimes the curriculum is not planned well enough to support the needs of all pupils with SEND. Leaders understand this and have decided to add capacity to the special educational needs team to support improvements in teaching and provision for pupils with SEND. However, leaders need to ensure that the curriculum and support for pupils with SEND are fully meeting the needs of all pupils with SEND.
- Teachers use different ways to check that pupils understand the topics they have been taught. In some subjects these checks help teachers plan the next steps of learning effectively, because teachers have an accurate view of what pupils have learned. This is not always so. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use assessment methods consistently well to check pupils' learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Dover Grammar School for Boys to be good on 2–3 February 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118931
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111240
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Maintained
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	797
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Les Craggs
Headteacher	Mr Philip Horstrup
Website	http://www.dovergramboys.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 February 2016

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, subject teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with a local authority representative on the telephone.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school website, publicly available pupil performance information, and other applicable school documentation.
- One hundred and ten responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and 106 accompanying free-text messages were considered as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including the single central record of checks on adults and safeguarding policies. An inspector met

with the designated leaders of safeguarding.

- An inspector met with a group of other teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and around school.
- English, modern foreign languages, science and geography were considered in depth as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Dylan Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gerard Strong

Ofsted Inspector

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