

Inspection of Devonport High School for Girls

Lyndhurst Road, Peverell, Plymouth, Devon PL2 3DL

Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive a good quality of education. Across the curriculum, pupils develop very strong knowledge, skills and understanding that prepare them very well for the next steps in their education. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils relish the opportunities to learn about the world around them. For example, pupils value trips to France and China to further improve their language skills.

Pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is outstanding. Pupils are attentive, focused and supportive of each other.

Devonport High School for Girls helps pupils to become model citizens. Through the curriculum, pupils develop an exceptionally strong understanding of democracy and the importance of helping each other. Year 12 and 13 students help younger pupils with their studies and their well-being. Younger pupils describe Year 12 and 13 students as 'big sisters'.

Staff provide an exceptional level of care for pupils. Staff prioritise pupils' mental well-being. Pupils agree that staff look after their welfare very well.

Pupils have high aspirations. Staff provide pupils with exceptionally detailed information about further education and employment. Pupils feel very well supported in making decisions about their next steps.

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

The curriculum develops pupils' knowledge about subjects alongside their understanding about the world beyond school. As a result, pupils leave Devonport High School for Girls as well-rounded individuals, very well prepared for life in twenty-first century Britain. Pupils study a rich breadth of subjects that enhance their view of the world. Pupils told inspectors how much they valued the opportunities to study beyond the formal curriculum. For example, pupils have opportunities to study astronomy, politics and photography.

Leaders plan carefully what pupils learn and when. Teachers select high-quality books. Teaching makes pupils think deeply. As a result, pupils develop exceptionally strong skills of analysis in their English work. Pupils learn to craft their writing with flair. Similarly, in art, pupils learn to express their perceptions of the visual world very well. Consequently, pupils achieve very well. However, leaders and staff have not ensured the same consistent approaches to teaching in some areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not always develop knowledge and understanding as deeply in a few subjects.

Leaders provide an effective programme of training for staff. As a result, there is a collaborative approach to sharing good practice. Leaders acknowledge that teaching

approaches are stronger in some areas of the curriculum than in others. They have put in place support to improve these areas. Leaders and governors pay great attention to the well-being of staff. They ensure that their workload is manageable. Many members of staff singled the headteacher out for praise as she provides strong support.

Pupils develop exceptionally strong empathy, kindness and tolerance. For example, they discuss with sophistication and knowledge the national issues of knife crime and sexual assault. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to explore their views of the world. Many pupils participate in international projects such as the Erasmus project, 'The Magic of Water' with schools in Romania, Croatia and Germany. Many pupils have regularly presented at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Pupils make a tangible contribution to every aspect of school life. They develop an enhanced sense of democracy and social justice.

Students in the sixth form experience a rich and varied curriculum. As well as their academic studies, they learn about different careers and higher education opportunities. Students are self-assured. They enjoy debating. For example, Year 13 students were able to discuss multiculturalism in Hispanic societies in Spanish with each other with confidence. Leadership of the sixth form is very strong, enabling students to develop socially as well as academically. Students have very high aspirations. For example, the proportion of students who study medicine at university is considerably above the national figure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring the emotional and physical well-being of pupils. They act swiftly and appropriately to keep pupils safe at all times. Leaders work well with external agencies and are not afraid to challenge decisions that they feel are inaccurate.

Staff receive appropriate training. They know how to refer their concerns to safeguarding leaders. Leaders keep detailed records of the actions they take.

What does the school need to do to improve

- Leaders have designed a well-sequenced, coherent curriculum in all key stages. However, the implementation of the curriculum in a few subject areas does not always ensure that all pupils consistently develop knowledge and understanding as securely and deeply as, for example, in English and art. Leaders must continue to ensure that teachers use teaching approaches that enable all pupils to develop strong knowledge which they can apply independently and successfully.

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	136588
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10058318
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
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	845
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Glynis Westcott
Headteacher	Anita Hemi
Website	www.dhsg.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2018

Information about this school

- The school selects pupils for admission using the 11 plus examination.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of education, health and care (EHC) plans is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

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

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior and curriculum leaders and governors.

- An inspector met with staff to consider their views.
- An inspector reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. We spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their school.
- We considered the views of 167 parents and carers who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire, along with 168 free-text messages. We also evaluated the views of 32 staff who responded to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the 235 pupils who responded to the pupil questionnaire.
- On the first day of the inspection, we focused on English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, business studies, art and physical education (PE). This meant that, in each subject, we met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Justine Hocking	Ofsted Inspector
Marie Hunter	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Gormley	Ofsted Inspector

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