

# Inspection of Denmark Road High School

Denmark Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL1 3JN

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected

Ofsted has not previously inspected Denmark Road High School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged High School for Girls to be outstanding, before it converted to academy status in April 2011. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. The school changed its name to Denmark Road High School in December 2018.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened in High School for Girls' effectiveness before it closed. Changes in the effectiveness of Denmark Road High School may have happened at any point since it opened.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy a rich, stimulating and ambitious curriculum. They encounter a diverse range of voices and perspectives. Pupils work hard, strive for and achieve success. In lessons, it is typical to see pupils deeply engaged in scholarly discussion.

Teachers get to know pupils and their aspirations well. Most pupils thrive within the school's culture of high expectation. While some pupils experience this as pressure, demand across the curriculum is appropriate.

A growing number of pupils report difficulties with their emotional and mental health linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders support pupils who experience these challenges and have plans to further develop and implement mental health provision.

Pupils have shared with leaders their experiences of discriminatory behaviour. Leaders have listened and worked with pupils and staff to address this. Pupils from minority ethnic groups feel included in the school now more than ever.

Most pupils feel safe in school and have confidence that staff deal with any unkindness or bullying well. Increasingly, pupils identify the 'Wellbeing Centre' as a place where they receive supportive pastoral care.

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

Through the curriculum, leaders introduce pupils to 'the best that has been thought and said'. The curriculum is well-structured and implemented. The way in which the curriculum celebrates diversity is a striking feature. Teachers use assessment effectively. As a result, pupils remember and use what they learn confidently. Subject leaders have designed the curriculum to help pupils expand their vocabulary in ambitious ways. This lends finesse to pupils' writing and helps to deepen their thinking.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the curriculum confidently and benefit from supportive teaching. However, in some cases, teachers are not sufficiently clear about the tiers of support in place for pupils with SEND. Leaders are working to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are fully met across the curriculum.

Leaders are proud of the way in which they supported pupils and staff during the national restrictions caused by COVID-19. They have identified a sharp rise in the number of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders are, therefore, increasingly focused on providing support for pupils' mental health as part of a school-wide strategy. Pupils learn about the importance of achieving a balance between study and leisure activity. They are encouraged to be kind to themselves and to support one another.

Most pupils are punctual and attend school well. Some pupils have lower-than-usual attendance, linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders have established systems to support the attendance of pupils.

Pupils display high levels of self-control and composure in lessons. Their courtesy towards adults is unfailing. However, a few pupils suffer unkindness from their peers. Leaders continue to develop pupils' respect for each other.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development through the 'Learning for Life' programme. This includes careers education. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, participate in an extensive range of sporting, creative, technical, cultural, and spiritual pursuits. Pupils discuss and debate their views on current and international affairs. They become active citizens who want to improve society.

A new trust board was formed in January 2021. The trustees are a suitably skilled group of leaders. Trustees have begun to think about their vision for the school. They encourage pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to come to the school and benefit from its ambitious ethos. However, the trustees are in the early stages of understanding the curriculum. As yet, they do not fully have the information they need to support and challenge leaders about the quality of education provided with sufficient rigour.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders use training to develop a culture of vigilance among staff. Staff know how to identify the signs that pupils are at risk of harm. They consider the ways pupils may be affected by sexual harassment and other harmful sexual behaviours.

Staff show concern for pupils' well-being and urge them to report anything that makes them feel uneasy. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their worries with staff in the 'Wellbeing Centre'.

Leaders ensure that appropriate background checks are carried out on adults working within the school.

In recent months, leaders have strengthened their capacity to respond quickly when they become aware of risks to pupils.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

**(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There is a lack of clarity about the tiers of support in place for pupils with SEND. This means that leaders do not have clear information on which to base their strategic decisions. Leaders should ensure that pupils with identified additional needs requiring support beyond that of other learners are specifically classified.
- The trust board is newly formed. This means that trustees are developing their understanding of some aspects of the school's work. Trustees should continue to work with school leaders so that they can better hold leaders to account for the quality of their work.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 136666   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Gloucestershire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10199284   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Grammar (selective)  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 11 to 18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Girls  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 988  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 260  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Andy Collyer   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Claire Giblin  |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.denmarkroad.org">www.denmarkroad.org</a>       |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## Information about this school

- This is grammar school for girls. The admissions policy is selective. Boys are admitted in the sixth form only.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND and the proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans are well below the national average for both groups of pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school changed its name to Denmark Road High School on 31 December 2018. The name of the predecessor school was High School for Girls.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the chair and two co-vice chairs of the trust board, and members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at curriculum plans and spoke with leaders and pupils about some other subjects, including the 'Learning for Life' curriculum.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of adults working within the school. She met with the designated safeguarding lead and the trustee responsible for safeguarding.
- Inspectors held discussions with single-sex groups of pupils to gather their views on the culture of the school.
- Inspectors met with the special educational need coordinator and spoke with pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered 60 responses to the Ofsted survey for staff and 198 responses to the survey for pupils. They also considered 221 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 135 free-text responses from parents.

## Inspection team

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lydia Pride, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Teresa Hill                 | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Matthew Collins             | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Sal Yunus                   | Ofsted Inspector        |

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