

Inspection of Dr Challoner's High School

Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP7 9QB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding 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 May 2012.

This school is part of a single-academy trust, Dr Challoner's High School, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alan Roe, who is also the headteacher, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christine Preston.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are unwaveringly encouraging and supportive of each other at this outstanding school. They recognise the rich history of excellence that Dr Challoner's has. Pupils are inspired to make the most of the interesting and varied opportunities on offer. They are eager to come to school each day, as there is so much to get involved with.

Pupils and staff are all highly ambitious in their pursuit of aspirational academic outcomes. This ambition fosters a strong culture in helping the school to achieve its aim to 'provide the best possible education for girls so that they will shape the world'. Pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Sixth-form students are highly self-aware and reflective about their education. They recognise how important the school's community and positive ethos are, particularly when welcoming pupils when they join the school. Older students ensure that younger pupils are given important pupil-led opportunities to contribute their voice to the school's exceptionally well-considered education. This helps pupils to feel included and valued.

Pupils' individual needs and aspirations are well known by both pastoral and teaching staff. This ensures that pupils receive a high level of support in response to any concerns they may have.

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

This school offers an extraordinary education. Classrooms are joyful places where pupils are excited and ambitious for their futures. Academic learning, development of character and cultural capital are all of equal importance. As one pupil described: 'We know we will do well in our exams, but it's everything else that takes the school to the next level.'

Teaching is highly effective. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of every pupil. They use this to plan and teach lessons that meet pupils' individual needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are more disadvantaged. This personalisation leads to a high level of trust between pupils and teachers. In lessons, pupils work in partnership with teachers to explore and deepen their knowledge. Pupils find fascination in their studies. They delight in scholarship and are supported through a carefully planned and highly ambitious curriculum. One teacher remarked that 'the pupils inspire us to do better and better'. Outcomes for pupils at both GCSE and A level are among the highest in the country.

Pupils' behaviour is unfailingly positive. The school has a vibrant atmosphere in which pupils feel they can succeed. Pupils are supportive and considerate of each other. They take real pride in seeing others strive and achieve, and if they can help, they do. Pupils' attendance is high, and the school is effective in supporting the very small number of pupils who may need some additional help to attend regularly.

The school's sixth form is exceptional. Sixth-form students are proud role models. They ensure that they provide the right guidance and support for their younger peers. All students are expected to be involved in leading and managing the many varied and interesting clubs on offer. Many students also act as subject prefects and coach younger pupils in their learning. Students consider how they strive to uphold and develop the school's traditions as a privilege, but they also recognise how it helps them to develop their own confidence and maturity.

Careers advice is plentiful and helps pupils to be ambitious and to understand their next steps. The school makes extensive use of pupils who have left the school to broaden pupils' understanding of the range of careers open to them. Sixth-form students host and interview visitors in front of an audience of peers, which further contributes to their confidence and experience.

The development of pupils' personal development and character is embedded across all aspects of school life. Subject curriculums are developed by knowledgeable teams who demonstrate passion for their subjects. Pupils' cultural awareness is broadened by aspects beyond the usual curriculum, such as visits from antiquities experts and trips to art installations. Pupils have the opportunity to travel abroad with the school in Year 9. The school ensures that disadvantaged pupils have the same opportunities as their classmates.

Pupils of all ages have a real love for the school. The curriculum helps them to learn how to be responsible, thoughtful, and respectful citizens. These behaviours can be seen in their conduct in lessons and how they behave towards each other.

Many of the school's staff have been in post for a number of years. Staff are highly positive about the school's ethos and their role in supporting this. School leaders understand the importance of helping staff to further develop their knowledge and skills in providing the exceptional support that is currently on offer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	137219
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10288006
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,315
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	391
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of trustees	Christine Preston
Headteacher	Alan Roe
Website	http://challonershigh.com/
Date of previous inspection	29 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school is a standalone academy.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders, and other staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design, geography, physical education, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at evidence from other curriculum areas.
- The inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys, and they spoke to staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Ed Mather, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jon Chaloner	Ofsted Inspector
Siobhan Lowe	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hanlon	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Williamson	Ofsted Inspector

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