

Inspection of Denbigh High School

Alexandra Avenue, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 1HE

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Donna Neely-Hayes. This school is a member of the Chiltern Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Adrian Rogers, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Graham Pryor.

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 10 October 2007.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud to attend Denbigh High School. They appreciate that teachers have high expectations of them and want them to be the best they can be. The curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils to succeed. Pupils respond positively to this challenge and commit themselves to success in and out of lessons.

The school offers a huge range of well-attended and inclusive extra-curricular clubs, including chess, gardening, and many sports. Pupils take part in an impressive enrichment programme. As part of this, they go to concerts and to the theatre. Pupils take part in competitions, for example designing apps to educate people about climate change. In addition to learning the curriculum and achieving very highly in examinations, they become confident, tolerant, and resilient young people.

Pupils feel safe at this school. They know about potential dangers. If pupils have concerns about their well-being, they feel confident enough to seek support and know how to access it.

Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. They behave very well in and out of the classroom. There is very little bullying and leaders deal with any incidents robustly.

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

The school has thought very carefully, both about what pupils need to know and how pupils learn what they need to know. The curriculum is rigorously planned, so that pupils can securely build up a broad range of knowledge over time. Teachers regularly check what pupils have learned; they skilfully adapt their teaching to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge and ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

The curriculum is broad, innovative, and highly ambitious for all learners, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils in Years 7 and 8 build on their learning in the creative arts by carrying out extended projects in production studies. These also develop pupils' presentational skills and independence. Most pupils study languages in key stage 4. Teachers use activities that are very well matched to pupils' needs. This enables all pupils to access the full curriculum. Wider reading tasks and online resources stimulate pupils' curiosity and successfully deepen their knowledge.

Pupils read often and widely, including in form time. The library is very popular. Books are carefully chosen to match and extend pupils' literacy. The school checks pupils' ability to read regularly. When pupils need additional support to become fluent and accurate readers, they receive it. As a result, they swiftly catch up with their peers.

Pupils are determined to do well. They grasp the importance of learning and learn how to study effectively. In lessons, pupils are engaged and active; they have an exceptional attitude to their learning. Pupils support each other to do well and seek to include everyone in the life of the school. Staff and pupils live up to the school's motto, 'high achievement for all is our shared responsibility.' Pupils' attendance at school is exemplary. On the very rare occasions that pupils need support to improve their behaviour, staff support them to do so. As a result, pupils make considerable progress in their learning, free of interruptions to lessons.

The school's values permeate through everything that it does. The personal development curriculum is planned very carefully. It ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain among people with different lifestyles and beliefs. External visitors lead memorable sessions on topics, such as gender equality and the dangers of knife crime. The careers programme is comprehensive. Pupils meet a wide range of

employers and do work experience. They gain the knowledge needed to make informed choices about their next steps.

The school is relentless in its pursuit of excellence. Leaders constantly seek ways of improving the school further. Staff and leaders follow the philosophy: 'don't prove, improve'. They work together and support each other to improve their practice. The trust provides useful training, which improves the quality of teaching. Governors check safeguarding and, with other leaders, work closely with parents.

Staff, including early career teachers, say that they are well supported with their well-being and workload.

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	136319
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10211900
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1127
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Pryor
Headteacher	Donna Neely-Hayes
Website	www.denbighhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in 2010. It became a member of the Chiltern Learning Trust in 2013.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative provisions.
- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, religious education, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, trustees and members of the local governing body,
- An inspector met with early career teachers and staff involved in their induction.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- An inspector spoke with representatives from the alternative provisions used by the school.
- 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 scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 94 responses and 34 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. He also considered the 62 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 15 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector
Wayne Jarvis	Ofsted Inspector
Sebastian Gasse	Ofsted Inspector

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