

Inspection of Dover Grammar School for Boys

Astor Avenue, Dover, Kent CT17 0DQ

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this ambitious, inclusive school. The school motto 'Fiat Lux' (Let There Be Light) informs all that the school does. The school has the highest expectations of pupils in all aspects of school life. They rise to the challenge. Pupils are motivated to learn and achieve highly. As one parent said, reflecting the views of many: 'DGSB is a fantastic school that really pushes my son to be his best.'

Behaviour in the school is exemplary because relationships across the school are very strong. Pupils and staff are kind and caring towards each other. Diversity is welcomed and celebrated. Pupils have no concerns about bullying and are kept safe. They know that staff will respond swiftly and effectively to any concerns.

Pupils flourish, benefiting from the extensive range of enrichment activities available to them. There is a wide choice of clubs to develop pupils' musical, creative and sporting talents, such as jazz band and film club. There is an abundance of trips and visits, both local and international. Many pupils are members of the Combined Cadet Force. Pupils hold many leadership positions, including as 'Fiat Lux' scholars and mentors and as members of the student parliament. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for their younger peers.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They are determined to provide opportunities for pupils to become the best version of themselves. Staff give their time tirelessly to support pupils. All staff, including recently qualified teachers, speak highly of the support and professional development they receive. They greatly value the consideration leaders give to their workload and well-being. Governors are loyal and committed. They carry out their statutory duties effectively and provide valuable support and challenge.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. Pupils study an appropriately broad range of subjects in key stage 3. In key stage 4, the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is studied by all pupils, combined with other subjects from a wide choice. The improved school facilities have enabled the school to offer new subjects, such as drama and food technology. In the sixth form, students can study a range of academic subjects, which cater for their interests and potential career pathways.

In many subjects, the curriculum has been carefully designed to build pupils' knowledge and skills with increasing complexity from Years 7 to 13. However, this is not the case in all areas. Consequently, some students reach the sixth form with insecure knowledge and skills, which affects their levels of achievement. Published examination outcomes in the sixth form are not as strong as in key stage 4.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) swiftly and accurately. Teachers receive detailed information about how they can meet the needs of pupils with SEND, as well as disadvantaged pupils. Teachers make

excellent use of this information to provide appropriate support. Consequently, pupils with SEND, as well as disadvantaged pupils, achieve well across the curriculum.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They plan thought-provoking and demanding activities. They make clear links to prior learning, which help pupils to reinforce and develop their knowledge. They use questioning and discussion well to make sure that pupils have understood new content. Robust approaches to checking what pupils know help teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and provide timely support where needed. Consequently, pupils deepen their understanding and remember facts and ideas, often from some time ago. They are confident, articulate learners who produce high-quality work.

Most pupils join the school with strong reading skills. The school identifies any pupils who may need extra help and ensures that this is swiftly provided so that pupils become more confident and fluent readers. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and develop a love of reading. The school library is a wonderful resource for pupils to enjoy.

Pupils' positive attitudes to their education are reflected in their high attendance. Staff know their pupils very well and work tirelessly with families to address any difficulties pupils may have with attending school.

Personal development provision is extremely well organised. Pupils learn through a carefully considered programme that broadens their horizons and deepens their cultural understanding. Pupils learn how to stay safe and look after their health and well-being. In the sixth form, the personal, social, health and economic curriculum addresses issues such as respect, consent, sexual harassment and healthy relationships appropriately and thoroughly. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to explore the fundamental British values and why they are important.

There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to find out about future careers through the 'DGSB Futures' programme. For example, they hear from visiting speakers, attend careers fairs and learn about the world of work first hand through work placements. Many go on to high-quality universities and apprenticeships. Those aiming for the most prestigious universities benefit from additional support and guidance through the school's 'Top Achievers Programme'. Consequently, all pupils are very well prepared to consider and move on to their next steps.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum sequencing in a few curriculum areas is not as advanced as it is in others. This means that pupils do not always secure the knowledge and skills they need for later study, especially in the sixth form. The school must ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are well sequenced from Year 7 to 13 so that pupils achieve well across all subjects studied.

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	118931
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10374481
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Foundation
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	899
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue King
Headteacher	Philip Horstrup
Website	www.dgsb.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative providers of educational provision.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector had a telephone call with the local authority representative and an external educational consultant who supports the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, English, history, mathematics and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential online staff survey. They took account of the responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents’ free-text comments. Inspectors considered the views of pupils shared in the confidential online pupil survey and through discussions held with pupils throughout the school.

Inspection team

Paula Sargent, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Greene	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Serridge	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Piper	Ofsted Inspector

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