



Dartford Grammar School for Girls

Address: Shepherds Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA1 2NT

Unique reference number (URN): 144100

Inspection report: 17 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Exceptional ●

Achievement

Exceptional ●

Pupils achieve extraordinarily well. Right from Year 7, they produce high-quality work that demonstrates their deep-rooted understanding of the broad curriculum that they study. They use this knowledge extremely well to engage in thoughtful and sophisticated debates about a range of topics. The quality of their work is consistently impressive, across both the academic and creative elements of the curriculum. They are extremely well prepared for high-quality onward destinations when they leave the school.

The standards that pupils achieve are reflected in consistently excellent examination outcomes over time. Attainment and progress measures at the end of Year 11 and Year 13 are very high. Any slight variations in outcomes are addressed swiftly and successfully, keeping pupil achievement over time at a very high level. Disadvantaged pupils, who make up almost a quarter of the school, do much better at the end of key stage 4 than their non-disadvantaged peers nationally.

Attendance and behaviour

Exceptional ●

Leaders' high expectations shine through these elements of the school. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are extremely high, with forensic monitoring used particularly well to identify and address the small number of instances where improvements could be made. No pupils are severely absent from school, and most have attendance that is well above the national average. Leaders share their strategic approach transparently with parents and carers to ensure their buy-in, promoting the message that attendance is everyone's business. Most importantly, pupils own their responsibility to attend regularly and on time.

Extremely high standards of conduct, self-control and respect are evident throughout. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both during lessons and as they move purposefully around the school. The school's behaviour policy is driven successfully by its highly effective promotion of celebration, reflection and accountability when things occasionally go wrong. Where a small number of pupils note frustrations about others' behaviour, this reflects the exceptionally high expectations they have for themselves and each other. This demonstrates the diligent and self-disciplined way that pupils approach their studies. Records show extremely low instances of poor behaviour, including bullying, over time. Internal exclusions and suspensions happen rarely but are used very effectively to maintain leaders' unwaveringly high expectations.

Personal development and wellbeing

Exceptional ●

Provision for pupils' personal development is impressive. It is a fundamental and completely integrated part of pupils' curricular offer. It gives pupils the skills, knowledge and attributes to navigate the world with integrity, sensitivity and compassion.

The personal, social and health education programme is planned meticulously. It is tailored precisely towards the school's high aspirations to prepare its pupils to be leaders of the future. The programme incorporates statutory requirements and gives pupils rich and

detailed knowledge about relevant topics, including health and wellbeing, relationships and consent. The accompanying wider programme of assemblies, tutor time and other activities provides layered and valuable opportunities that support character development and resilience extremely well. The well-established house system fosters a sense of belonging and community among the pupil body through working collaboratively across year groups on philanthropic endeavours. A broad and well-established extra-curricular programme enables pupils to nurture their sporting and creative prowess alongside their academic learning. Engagement in these activities is tracked closely to ensure that those who would benefit most are able to participate fully.

Careers education is a particular strength of the school. Consistently effective and impartial guidance equips pupils with the detailed knowledge to make really well-informed decisions about their future career pathways. As a result, almost all pupils move on to secure and sustain high-quality university, apprenticeship or employment destinations that enable them to flourish.

The quality of the school's personal development and wellbeing provision is reflected constantly in pupils' behaviours and interactions. Pupils demonstrate a highly-developed understanding of the world around them. They engage respectfully in healthy and constructive debates that reflect different views in a considered and measured way. Their knowledge of and respect for a wide range of cultures and beliefs is demonstrated consistently in their interactions with each other.

Post 16 provision

Exceptional 

Post-16 provision is extremely well considered, with students' needs and leaders' high aspirations incorporated seamlessly. A carefully constructed study programme keeps learning really broad while enabling academic excellence. An impressive enrichment activity programme deliberately addresses gaps in life skills, such as learning to swim or driving awareness. Consequently, students' holistic needs are met extremely well.

The strengths in curriculum and teaching seen elsewhere in the school, including for those with additional needs, are even more prominent across the sixth form. This means that students achieve extremely high educational standards by the end of Year 13. The sophisticated programme of impartial careers education enables them to secure impressive onward destinations with prestigious employers and universities.

Students who join the school in Year 12 quickly become fully integrated into school life, seizing leadership opportunities that benefit younger pupils and the community as a whole. They value opportunities to participate in sport, recognising how it promotes leadership and team-building skills, as well as healthy future living. They model aspirational values proudly with younger pupils, such as through acting as mentors. The exceptional quality of the personal, social and health education provision is reflected in the highly reflective and thoughtful individuals that students become.

Strong standard ●

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Pupils benefit from a rich and well-sequenced curriculum that develops their expertise across a broad range of subjects in a logical and coherent way. Leaders keep the curriculum under review, ensuring that it consistently enables pupils to develop a broad and deep body of knowledge that equips them successfully for the future.

Teachers are absolute experts in their fields and use their detailed knowledge skilfully to deepen pupils' understanding. High-quality teaching is an expectation for every lesson. Consequently, pupils learn extremely well. In lessons, pupils are engrossed in learning, demonstrating independence, resilience and a capacity to learn from each other through collaborative work. They demonstrate sophisticated levels of oracy during their interactions with each other and with staff, communicating complex ideas coherently.

As the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities increases across the school, an effective coaching programme is helping staff to further refine how they meet pupils' increasingly varied needs. The impact of this work was particularly evident across post-16 provision during the inspection. Feedback to inform pupils' next steps is embedded into practice, with pupils receiving timely advice and support that enables them to improve rapidly. Teaching matches pupils' emerging needs very well.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

This school promotes a fully inclusive ethos where pupils feel valued and seen. Leaders are highly ambitious for everyone to achieve their full potential, regardless of any barriers they may face. High-quality teaching is prioritised for all. Those with physical impairments get exactly the right support to enable them to excel. Special educational needs that emerge post-16 are addressed swiftly. Children in care receive wraparound support that matches their holistic needs closely. Use of alternative provision is sparing and entirely appropriate. Where relevant, external expertise supports staff well in developing their expertise and meeting pupils' needs precisely.

Teachers understand the varied risks to pupils' academic and personal success. The careful and sensitive support they put in place enables each pupil to overcome any barriers to their academic achievement and personal growth. Sensitive, nurturing strategies help pupils with social and emotional needs to engage fully with their learning. Careful tracking of each pupil's progress over time enables additional support to be put in place quickly. As a result, pupils rapidly overcome hurdles and achieve the highest possible academic standards. In places, the wealth of information held by leaders could be used even more precisely to inform future decision-making on a whole-school level.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Senior leaders know their school extremely well. Their ambition for excellence is unquestionable. They are astute and accurate in identifying the school's many strengths, while being uncompromising about where further improvements could be made. Their

rightful investment in teaching and learning is matched closely to the school's evolving priorities as the pupil profile changes. For example, a training programme this year has focused specifically on developing staff expertise in teaching pupils with specific special educational needs. Leaders are equally as invested in pupils' wellbeing as they are in their academic accomplishments, ensuring that ambition is high throughout.

Leaders set the tone for the evident culture of high aspiration. Staff work hard and are expected to do so. They value leaders' deliberate investment in their wellbeing, such as through flexible working arrangements. Those in the early stages of their career feel extremely well supported to develop their craft. That investment in staff development and leadership is equally evident for more experienced colleagues.

Governance provides the school with effective challenge and support to improve. The board of trustees, while small, is suitably equipped with the expertise needed to fulfil its governance role effectively. Statutory duties are fulfilled successfully. The supporting local governing body is developing its rigour through deliberate and strategic planning in order to provide even greater governance rigour and capacity.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils undoubtedly flourish at this school. Aspirations are unquestionably high, both from pupils themselves and the adults who enable them to thrive. Staff know pupils really well as individuals, understanding and meeting their needs extremely successfully. Consequently, pupils develop into happy, accomplished and capable individuals, demonstrating the attributes to be leaders of the future. They achieve academic excellence that lays a firm foundation for them to achieve their full potential, moving on to high-quality education, employment and training when they leave the school.

Pupils' thirst for knowledge is clearly evident. They are motivated to work hard, engaging thoughtfully and enthusiastically in their lessons. Moreover, they value what they learn beyond the taught curriculum, such as through leadership opportunities and a personal development programme that has been constructed with their needs at its heart. As a result, pupils become self-directed, kind and resilient individuals who respect each other and the world around them.

The atmosphere around the school is both harmonious and vibrant. Pupils of all ages interact meaningfully as they move around the school and during social times, with male sixth-form students integrating fully with their female peers. Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures are welcomed equally, each adding their own unique dimension to the school's highly inclusive culture. Across the school, pupils' expectations for each other's behaviour are extremely high. As a result, instances of less than excellent behaviour, including bullying, are extremely rare. Even these are used as a learning opportunity, through using reflection to help pupils own and learn from their mistakes and make more positive choices in the future.

Next steps

- Ensure that current work to strengthen governance is successful in increasing corporate rigour, supporting leaders exceptionally well in sustaining the highest standards of education and care.
 - Refine and sustain recent work to further develop responsive teaching, so that all pupils benefit fully from the swift use of strategies that address emerging misconceptions in lessons.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Arete Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sharon Pritchard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Janice Brooke.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with senior and middle leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils during the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the chair of trustees.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one alternative provision.

Headteacher: Mrs Sharon Pritchard

Lead inspector:

Kathryn Moles, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Paula Sargent, Ofsted Inspector

Maria Roberts, Ofsted Inspector

Hanna Miller, Ofsted Inspector

John Vennart, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,248

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,119

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

23.33%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.40%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.49%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	94.9%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	99.4%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	99.4%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	75.5	46.0	Above
2023/24 (final)	75.3	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	75.2	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.82	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.93	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	91.9%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97.2%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	96.6%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	71.2	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	70.4	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	71.5	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.50	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.65	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	91.9%	53.1%	38.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	97.2%	53.1%	44.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	96.6%	52.4%	44.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	71.2	50.4	20.8
2023/24 (final)	70.4	50.0	20.4
2022/23 (final)	71.5	50.3	21.2

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.50	0.16	0.34
2022/23 (final)	0.65	0.17	0.48

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	99%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	99%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	100%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	39.77	34.99	Above
2023/24 (final)	41.00	34.38	Above
2022/23 (final)	38.95	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	2.8%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.4%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.5%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.5%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	9.7%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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