

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Dr Challoner's Grammar School

Chesham Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5HA

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Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

## Outcome

Dr Challoner's Grammar School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is David Atkinson. This school is the only school in the Dr Challoner's Grammar School single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Serkis.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff live and breathe the school's values of 'aspiration, kindness and resilience'. The result is a vibrant, happy and inclusive school where academic rigour and personal development are equally important. Staff firmly believe that all pupils can succeed and flourish. They ensure that high-quality learning is accessible to all. Consequently, pupils achieve very highly in public examinations and also develop into confident and skilful learners. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils are very proud of their school. They enjoy learning and their behaviour is excellent, both in lessons and during social time. Pupils are enthusiastic participants in the impressive range of extra-curricular clubs and trips. These activities allow pupils to discover and nurture interests and talents. The 400th anniversary celebrations are providing even more opportunities to make shared memories. The sixth-form students are impressive embodiments of the school's values. They take on a range of responsibilities, from supporting learning, to helping run clubs and leading pupil voice. Younger pupils rightly look up to them as role models.

Parents and carers are hugely supportive of the school. They feel their children are seen as individuals and appreciate the rounded and caring approach.

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

Pupils study a broad academic curriculum in all key stages. Important knowledge in each subject is carefully sequenced but also set in a broad context. Consequently, pupils routinely make connections between what they have learned and with the wider world. Staff have very strong subject knowledge and benefit from high-quality professional development. They adapt teaching effectively. These adaptations are based on the detailed information they receive about pupils' individual needs. Consequently, pupils of all abilities learn together successfully. Teachers check for pupils' understanding systematically and address any misconceptions swiftly. Pupils respond readily to the feedback they receive. For example, pupils' written work and pronunciation in modern foreign languages show high levels of precision.

Teachers use the school's values to create stimulating and aspirational learning environments. Pupils respond positively to this and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning, whether working individually or in groups. They relish opportunities to rise to challenges and tackle demanding tasks. The school's work on oracy ensures that pupils are skilful and enthusiastic participants in discussions. Many of these are on very complex issues, such as the impact of the budget in Year 12 economics. In addition, pupils read widely and to a very high standard. Where necessary, pupils receive effective help so they can access ambitious texts confidently alongside their peers. Consequently, pupils recall and connect spontaneously what they have learned, and produce work to a very high standard, including pupils with SEND. They are extremely well prepared both for the next phase of their learning and examination success.

Pupils like school and attend regularly. They benefit from excellent relationships with each other and with staff. They are cared for well and have adults they trust, who they can talk to if they have problems. Younger pupils appreciate support from sixth-form mentors and tutors. The school has recently made some very well-received adjustments to its behaviour approaches, linking rewards even more closely to its values.

Pupils' personal and character development is a high priority and promoted consistently well. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or who have SEND, can participate fully in all elements of school life. This ensures that pupils develop knowledge and skills which will stand them in good stead for their future. The school's personal development curriculum and careers programme are both very thoughtfully planned and delivered. Content is age appropriate and relevant to the school's context. Pupils learn about positive and safe relationships, and respect for others. They also learn about navigating the online world. For example, pupils contribute to research on the secure and meaningful use of artificial intelligence. The school has a very varied network of partners and alumni. These people inspire pupils and provide them with impartial information about next steps in education and employment, including apprenticeships. Pupils go on to a wide range of meaningful and prestigious destinations.

The school is not complacent and there is a 'restless desire to get better'. School improvement is anchored in its values and being able to support each individual pupil to thrive. Governors provide strong support and challenge, not least linked to safeguarding.

Staff are extremely proud of the school and appreciate its focus on collaboration, equality and workload. One staff member summed up the views of many when they described working at the school as being 'one team of equal value'.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in November 2019.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136419
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341672
<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>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,370
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	452
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Serkis
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Atkinson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.challoners.com">www.challoners.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is the only school in the Dr Challoner's Grammar School single academy trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative 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

- 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 met with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- Inspectors met with four members of the board of trustees.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and also considered pupils' opinions expressed through the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunch time.
- 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' interest first.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed in through Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Simmonds	Ofsted Inspector

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