

# Inspection of Devonport High School for Boys

Paradise Road, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon PL1 5QP

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Inspection dates: 17 to 18 October 2023

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>  |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>  |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Outstanding</b>   |
| Personal development         | <b>Outstanding</b>   |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>  |
| Sixth-form provision         | <b>Outstanding</b>   |
| Previous inspection grade    | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

The headteacher of this school is Dan Roberts. This school is a grammar school and a single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Carolyn Bruce-Spencer.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Devonport High School for Boys as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their school. Pupils receive a good standard of education and learn a range of challenging subjects. They enjoy their learning and relish the many opportunities to extend their knowledge about the world. Through the curriculum, pupils develop high aspirations.

From Year 7 to Year 13, pupils develop exceptional knowledge and understanding about citizenship. Through the very well planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme, pupils and students in the sixth form learn about life in modern Britain. Pupils and sixth-form students have many opportunities to develop leadership skills. For example, they are elected to 'Devonport Voice', the pupil council which supports the school's development. The school's vision that pupils will learn 'confidence with humility' is fully enacted throughout the curriculum.

Students in the sixth form learn an exceptional curriculum. They embrace learning and value highly the well-considered programme about careers and higher education.

Pupils have very strong relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around the school. They are polite, respectful and welcoming. Pupils state that bullying is extremely rare, but that staff would resolve issues swiftly if they occurred.

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

The school has worked diligently and intelligently to develop a well-structured curriculum. In many subjects, pupils build on their prior knowledge well to enable them to learn more complex concepts. For example, in mathematics, pupils draw on what they already know to solve very challenging problems. As a result of improvements to the curriculum, more pupils choose to study a language at A level. Pupils develop strong reading and writing skills across the curriculum. Pupils use talk very well to develop their understanding. However, some subjects are less well developed. Although pupils strive to do well, some pupils do not fully comprehend what they have studied before they move on to more challenging ideas.

Students in the sixth form study an exceptional curriculum. Students build their knowledge progressively. For example, Year 12 students spoke with impressive fluency in Spanish about the impact of technology on society. Students are very proud of their school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive bespoke support so they flourish in their learning. Disadvantaged pupils are provided with personalised support to ensure that there are no barriers to achieving well.

The school has a moral drive which places pupils at the heart of what is a broad curriculum. Pupils enhance their learning and their knowledge of society through the

breadth of opportunities offered. For example, the school has an extensive series of visits, such as to Malaga where pupils study Spanish both in the community and at a college. They visit Iceland to extend their knowledge in geography.

Pupils and sixth-form students work closely with the school and the board of trustees through an equality, diversity and inclusion board. They work hard to promote equity of opportunity in the school and beyond. Pupils and sixth-form students have been trained to support pupils who experience grief and other profound mental health issues. Pupils study a rich careers curriculum that supports them to make informed decisions about their next steps. The breadth and depth of the personal development curriculum is exceptional.

Pupils and sixth-form students aspire to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. Older pupils develop mentoring and tutoring skills through supporting younger pupils in their learning. The school's approach to behaviour management is excellent. Leaders and staff support pupils to develop an informed understanding of misbehaviour when it occurs. Through extremely well-planned programmes and expert dialogue with staff, pupils learn to understand the appropriate way to behave and learn how to manage their emotional responses. This prepares pupils very well for life beyond school.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education that pupils receive. They also value highly the extra-curricular provision, where pupils engage in drama, music, chess and sports clubs, among many. Staff are unanimous in their pride in working at the school. They feel very well supported by the school's leadership, including the board of trustees. Staff report that there is strong support for their emotional well-being and workload. Trustees have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They provide support and challenge in equal measure.

## **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 is not consistently well planned in a few subjects. As a result, some pupils do not learn key knowledge well enough, which hinders their ability to learn more-complex concepts later. The school must ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is structured in a way that builds progressively on what pupils have securely learned.

## 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>                    | 136496  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Plymouth  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10267913  |
| <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>        | 1,238   |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 367   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees                                     |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Carolyn Bruce-Spencer                                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Dan Roberts   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.dhsb.org">http://www.dhsb.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | Not previously inspected                              |

## Information about this school

- The school selects pupils for admission using the 11-plus examination.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of education, health and care (EHC) plans is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- 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 educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, business studies with economics and design technology. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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 considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

## Inspection team

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Susan Aykin, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Matthew Collins             | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Gemma Tatlow                | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Richard Barnes              | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Daniel Mather               | Ofsted Inspector        |

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