

# Dartford Grammar School for Girls Profile

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## Dartford Grammar School for Girls

Shepherds Lane

Dartford, Kent, DA1 2NT

Telephone: 01322 223123

<http://www.dartfordgrammargirls.kent.sch.uk>

Local Authority:	Kent
Age range:	11-18
Number of pupils:	1000
Head teacher:	Mrs Jane Wheatley
Chair of governors:	Mrs Janice Brooke

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## What have been our successes this year?

**This report covers the Academic Year 2009/10**

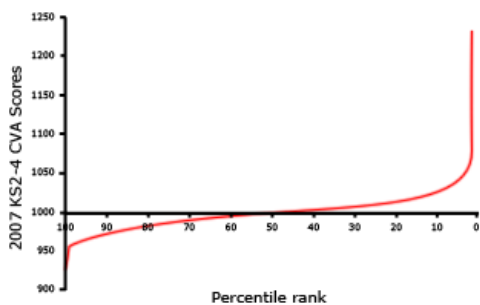
Major successes for the last academic year:

- 2nd in the country in the DFE 2010 GCSE league tables;
- Successful introduction of the AS Extended project in the sixth form;
- Bronze Award: Investor in People;
- Reaccreditation for the third time as an ArtMark Gold award school;
- Opening of the College Block with the concurrent removal of the mobiles;
- 100+ different enrichment opportunities run for students;
- Arts award celebration for students completing bronze and silver awards;
- Year 7 Science Olympics for local secondary schools;
- Science fair for over 2,000 primary and secondary students.

## What are we trying to improve?

During the next academic year we will be reviewing our tutorial support systems and introducing a new virtual learning environment. This will enhance home/school communication and ensure that students are fully supported in their learning.

## How much progress do pupils make between 11 and 16?

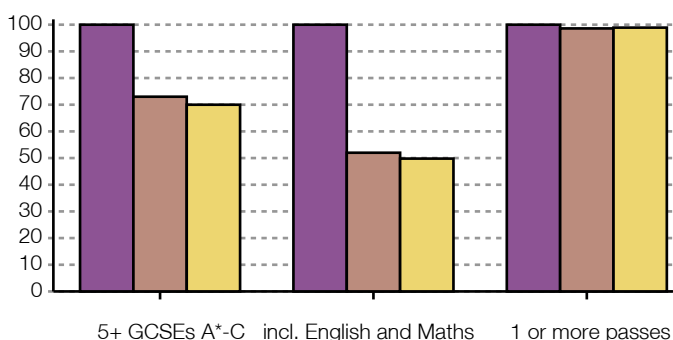


- Our School
- ┌ Confidence interval

The chart shows our school's contextual value added (CVA) score relative to that of other secondary schools. CVA is a statistical means of assessing how effective a school is, by measuring pupils' progress using their test and examination results. The confidence interval shows the range within which we can be confident the score (calculated on the results of only one year group) represents the overall effectiveness of a school. The percentile rank shows the percentage of schools with a score equal to or higher than ours.

In June 2010 we celebrated outstanding GCSE results. These were our best ever set of GCSE results with 63% A\*/A grades overall and 77 students gaining 8 or more A\*/A grades. On average, in Mathematics and the separate Sciences, 80% of students gained A\*/A grades and in English Language 83% of students gained A\*/A grades. Two students obtained 12 or more A\* grades, which is a remarkable achievement. Students enter the school with good examination results and make very good progress during their time at the school.

## How well do our pupils achieve at age 16?



- Our school
- Local schools (Local Authority)
- All schools

This shows the percentage of pupils (who were at the end of Key Stage 4) who in 2009 achieved 5 or more GCSEs (and equivalent) at grades A\*-C, 5 or more GCSEs (and equivalent) at grades A\*-C including English and mathematics GCSE, and one or more GCSEs (and equivalent) at grades A\*-G.

All students in June 2009 achieved 5 A\*-C grades including mathematics and English. The current graph shows the data for that academic year. These results correspond to second place in the national league tables. We are a high achieving academic school.

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## **How have our results changed over time?**

All students at the school take a wide range of external examinations at different times during Key Stage 4 (years 9-11). They are traditionally successful in these examinations. Able students have the opportunity to take skills based AS examinations.

In 2010 all but one student gained at least 5 A\*-C grades including English and mathematics and over 60% gained 5A/A\* grades. The general trend in GCSE examination results is a slight increase in the higher grades (A\*/A grades). Students are achieving success in a wide range of subjects including languages and the humanities.

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## **How are we making sure that every child gets teaching to meet their individual needs?**

The school curriculum framework establishes a broad academic base for students in Key Stage 3. Students then begin make some choices in language, humanities and the arts in Year 9. Subjects are taught by specialist teachers so students develop their aptitudes. The school's tracking systems ensure that students are developing as expected. Students enjoy discussion and contribute creatively to lessons.

In year 10 students select options so they specialise within a balanced curriculum. They are mentored if needed to achieve the best possible results. Able students are given opportunities to extend their studies and qualifications, for example by studying an AS course or through enrichment activities.

Students study four AS subjects in Year 12 (from over 30 subjects offered) plus an enrichment course. Students start the AS Extended project after their AS examinations in June. They then study three or four A level subjects in Year 13. Sixth form students can gain an overreaching qualification; the AQA Baccalaureate. This is awarded at one of three grades (distinction, merit or pass).

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## **How do we make sure all pupils attend their lessons and behave well?**

Student rewards include certificates, early lunch passes and lucky dips. Our behaviour for learning code enables us to identify problems and support students. Reflection sessions ensure students are given an opportunity to determine their priorities for improvement.

Students earn House points for academic achievement, hard work and citizenship. The higher level certificates and prizes are presented at prestigious assemblies at the end of. Students are rewarded for consistently demonstrating positive behaviour and this is psychologically beneficial to the community. Behaviour is consistently very good around the school.

Attendance is above the national average. Students attend regularly and are aware of the positive link between attendance and achievement. The recent introduction of a system which texts home if students are absent improves home/school links.

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## **What have pupils told us about the school, and what have we done as a result?**

The school has an active School Council who are organised by the student leadership team. Last year their annual conference was held in school and focused on improving the school environment given the potential to create new green spaces at the centre of the school. Many of their suggestions were implemented at the start of the year and we will continue to develop these recreational areas this year.

Some students were also concerned that the rewards system was not being consistently implemented and this will be reviewed during the current academic year at the school council conference.

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## **How are we working with parents and the community?**

Last May parents completed the sixth annual survey which was once more very positive. Overall the parents rated us as an outstanding school. Their highest priority for improvement this year was teaching quality. In response to this feedback moving teaching from good to outstanding has been set as a school priority this year.

In addition to the subject-based consultation meetings for individual students we held information meetings which explained the next stage in a student's education and how parents can support them. Academic review meetings enable parents to gain an overview of each student's progress. Reports are sent home three times a year. In 2009/10 we reviewed the descriptors to make them easier to interpret.

As a specialist school we work closely with local schools running events such as the science fair and puzzle days which engage students and support their learning. The community has access to school facilities in the evenings and on Saturdays. Sixth form students organise events such as the Rowhill party, primary school pantomime and senior citizens tea party.

## What activities and options are available to pupils?

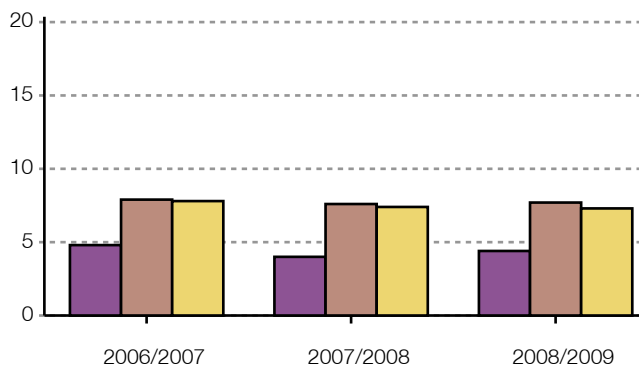
We pride ourselves on the wide range of curriculum enrichment activities offered to the students. Enrichment programmes are run within the curriculum teams. The school also organises an enrichment programme when the normal pattern of lessons is replaced by activities. Both structured and unstructured situations are created to inspire individuals and encourage them to develop their personal, thinking and learning skills.

During the year all groups participate in a wide range of activities. There are many opportunities for students to participate in music, dance, drama and artistic activities in school. There are also visits to concerts, galleries, the opera and theatres during the year. A wide range of sporting activities are available on site and the PE department runs many very successful teams.

Students are offered a range of optional residential opportunities in the UK and abroad which last year included a Y7 residential trip; Y8 study visits to France and Spain; Y9 trips to Cornwall, Kent Mountain Centre and Wales; Y10 visits to Paris; sixth form work experience in Switzerland and an expedition to the Himalayas.

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## How do our absence rates compare with other schools?



This chart shows the percentage of half days missed through authorised and unauthorised absence by all pupils at the school. Information is given for the school, for schools within the local authority and for all schools.

■ Our school   ■ Local schools (Local Authority)   ■ All schools

School attendance is outstanding which confirms the student's positive attitude to their learning and their enjoyment of school.

## **How do we make sure our pupils are healthy, safe and well-supported?**

Most learners have a very good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The PE department supported by sixth form students runs an extensive optional programme at lunchtime and after school. Older students are encouraged to use the weights room. School meals have been reviewed by the students through school council and the range of healthy meals available increased further.

The school has AEN, English science and mathematics teaching assistants to support academic development. Pastoral support is offered under the direction of the three Heads of Key Stage.

Students have positive attitudes to their school feel safe and well-supported here. The rare incidences of bullying are dealt with firmly and promptly.

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## **What do our pupils do after year 11?**

The Connexions data shows that 98% of students in year 11 went on to further education. The majority of our students progressed from year 11 into the sixth form. Some transferred to other institutions such as colleges to follow vocational courses. The very few students who did not wish to continue with their education were supported by Connexions and the school's careers advisor in selecting appropriate employment.

During year 11 students are supported by their tutors and through the PSHE programme. All students have a consultation meeting in year 11 with a senior member of staff regarding their future options to ensure that they have the opportunity to gain the necessary qualifications. The successful Friday afternoon activities programme supports transition into the sixth form.

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## **Ofsted's view of our school**

This is a good school with many outstanding features. Standards are high and students achieve well. Reflecting a quotation on its website: 'The test of a successful education is not the amount of knowledge that a pupil takes away from school, but her appetite to know and her capacity to learn', the school successfully encourages students to study further by helping them to learn with interest and enthusiasm. Students mature into thoughtful and considerate young adults who appreciate the part they can play in society in their futures.

Students feel very safe and are happy at school. Their behaviour is excellent and they get on well with each other and with members of staff, valuing these good relationships highly. Students' well-being and personal development are outstanding. The school tackles the very rare instances of bullying firmly and students are confident that there is no racism. Students are very aware of what they should do to lead a healthy lifestyle and realistic that they do not always put such knowledge into practice. They confess to needing chocolate bars on occasions and a few sixth formers admit they do not take enough exercise.

The school has an outstanding, imaginative curriculum. In 2004 it registered to deliver the International Baccalaureate (IB) Mid Years Programme (MYP) and became a DfES pilot school for teaching the Key Stage 3 curriculum in two years rather than three. This allows students to feel less pressurised following their GCSE courses. Parents would like to receive clearer information about how the curriculum works. The range and number of extra-curricular trips and activities are excellent as are the numerous events offered through the school's science specialism.

The school knows that a small number of students could achieve even more GCSE A\*/A grades and it is successfully raising the percentage of these high grades. Teaching and learning are good with students' keen thinking reflected in the interesting questions they ask. They appreciate being guided to consider how they learn and how to study. Teaching does not regularly include references to how work is relevant to students' lives and some lessons are not delivered with enough fun and excitement.

Students' preparation for the world of work is well considered and they have very good basic skills, for example in mathematics. They give generously to charities and respond well to initiatives which enable them to contribute to the local and overseas communities. The care, guidance and support they receive are outstanding as the school successfully nurtures and guides students as they mature.

Leadership and management are good. With a keen awareness of everything that happens in the school, the headteacher gives clear and focused direction to curriculum developments and the areas where improvements are needed. Senior and middle leaders are supportive and efficient.

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Date of last inspection: 25-Apr-2007

Ofsted graded our school as good

Inspectors made judgements on a scale: outstanding (grade 1); good (2); satisfactory (3); inadequate (4).



[View the Ofsted page for Dartford Grammar School for Girls](#)

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## **What have we done in response to Ofsted?**

The Ofsted target is an agreed focus for all curriculum areas. Plans have been developed to ensure that students are supported in aiming for the highest possible grades and students now meet these more challenging targets.

We have continued to develop our 'national curriculum +' offer for students in all Key Stages, ensuring that activities are relevant for all students.

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# Information about our sixth form

## Our results this year

A level results are reviewed using the ALPs system. This compares individual student's grades against the grades which high-achieving students with similar prior attainment gained in a baseline year. Analysis is therefore carried out against a set of aspirational data. The report arrives in school in September so we can use it to review our performance.

Dartford Grammar School for Girls celebrated its outstanding A Level results in 2009/10. Students worked hard to obtain the best possible grades. Thirty four students have gained three or more A/A\* grades, and well over half of them have achieved at least one A/A\* grade. Between them the students achieved 60 of the new A\* grades in a wide range of subjects. This grade is awarded to students who gain more than 90% in all their A2 papers.

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## How have our results changed over time?

Our A level results are consistently very good. Students achieve challenging targets and this is reflected in their individual results. We offer a diverse range of subjects and while there are individual fluctuations between subjects these reflect differences in subject difficulty and the students who have selected a course rather than one subject being more successful than another. Results are consistent across all subjects.

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## What have been the successes of the sixth form this year?

The Wednesday enrichment programme continued to flourish with students engaged in a wide variety of activities. Sixth form students organised events such as the Harvest Festival, Jeans for Genes, Toys to the Tree, the Rowhill Party and a tea party for local residents. They also participated in programmes such as the Young Enterprise Competition, national debating competitions, Duke of Edinburgh Award and an expedition to the Himalayas. The pantomime for local students was very successful.

The AQA Baccalaureate enabled students to accredit the enrichment activities they undertook. There are many and varied enrichment opportunities available to students at Dartford Grammar School for Girls, which enhance the skills and personal qualities of its students.

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## **What are we trying to improve in our sixth form?**

We continued to develop the sixth form study area to ensure students are utilising their study periods effectively. The planned introduction of boys into the sixth form in September 2010 meant we reviewed all our procedures to ensure they were robust and effective.

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## **What do our students do after leaving the sixth form?**

Nearly all our sixth form students continue into higher education courses. The majority of students go to University, opting for a wide range of institutions and courses. A few students choose employment rather than further study. All students are supported by both our own careers guidance manager and the Connexions service.

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## **More Information**

If you would like more information about school policies, including our policies on special educational needs and disability, admissions, finance, school food and our complaints procedure, please contact us:

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