



Didcot Girls' School

Committed to Excellence

Additional Information 2023/2024

The School

Didcot Girls' School is a highly successful 11–18 school which prides itself on a vibrant, inclusive and respectful learning environment and is wholly committed to excellence. This commitment was recognised by Ofsted in November 2022 when the school was judged to be “Outstanding” (the highest possible grading).

“Pupils achieve exceptionally well both academically and in terms of personal development. This includes those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and relationships are respectful, including in the sixth form.” (Ofsted)

Our school is moving from strength to strength. Examination results remain exceptionally strong with our progress score placing us amongst the top schools nationally. We fully intend to continue this outstanding trajectory of development.

As the only all girls' state school in the county we pride ourselves on providing leadership roles and experiences for all of our students. Our aspiration is for all of our girls to leave us as confident, resilient and articulate young women and we use leadership roles across the school to develop these qualities. We believe that single sex education up to 16 allows our girls to thrive both academically and socially as they realise their full potential.

Our vibrant House system promotes friendly but fierce competition whilst also enabling girls of different ages to mix. The Leadership Ladder recognises and celebrates our students' participation and engagement in school life, growing our leaders of the future.

We offer a range of languages, including Mandarin Chinese for girls to study during their time with us. The strength of our languages provision enables us to share our expertise with our primary partners. We have well developed links with a range of international partners and make regular visits abroad as well as receiving many foreign visitors.

Excellent specialist facilities at the school include: thirteen science laboratories, Sports Hall, Language Laboratory, Dance Studio, Drama Studio, seven ICT network rooms, ceramics kiln within the Art Department, and bespoke classrooms for Food, Product Design, Textiles and Learning Support.

In 2017, we also opened our new Wellbeing Centre to further improve the excellent pastoral care we offer our students.

The school has a spacious site including playing fields, netball and tennis courts, social areas, attractive gardens and grassed recreational areas.

Didcot Girls' School and St Birinus Boys' School joined together into the Ridgeway Education Trust in September 2015. Governors of both schools are excited by the opportunities this development offers for girls and boys to benefit from the best which both schools have to offer whilst retaining our distinctive single sex status from 11–16. Didcot Sixth Form has been run in partnership between the two schools for many years as a highly successful mixed sixth form. Our close links with St Birinus mean that our young people are able to benefit from the excellent provision offered by both schools: careers events, trips and residentials, drama productions and provision for Advanced Learners are available to students from both schools.

In addition to our Open Evening and Open Mornings, we also encourage prospective parents to visit the school at any time in the school year. You are warmly invited to telephone the school to make an appointment – the Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team are always very happy to take prospective parents on a tour of the school.

The Vision for our school

Consultation with students, staff, parents and governors has led to an agreement of the core values which underpin our aims for our school community. We share a deep commitment to these three core values:

1. A school where everyone is included, at the heart of the community.
2. A school with high expectations which provides quality learning experiences for all.
3. A safe and happy school which creates a sense of pride and promotes respectful relationships for all.

In all that we do, we are 'committed to excellence' and our mission statement captures the essence of our school: we are a vibrant school community which empowers girls to become resilient and to fulfil their potential as future leaders.

The DGS Vision

What makes Didcot Girls' School distinctive?

- Our reputation is deservedly a school 'committed to excellence'
- The school values are tangible and clearly understood by all stakeholders
- The particular strengths of an all girls' context are widely shared and highly visible and driven through a Growth Mindset culture
- Our aspiration for all of our students to develop as future leaders
- Our commitment to language learning creates an excellent provision

High Quality Teaching and Learning

Our teachers take enormous pride in crafting interesting and challenging lessons.

- Our Teaching and Learning Principles are research informed and student centred and help ensure all students make progress.
- They teach with flair, creativity and enthusiasm for their subjects, helping students see the relevance of their subject in and beyond the classroom.
- We prioritise the development of excellent oracy, literacy, numeracy and IT skills
- The creative use of technology creates a cutting-edge provision to support high quality learning and teaching.

What does this mean?

Staff share a common language for high quality teaching that focuses on making sure students are 'working hard, thinking hard' and create learning opportunities that help students develop a lifelong curiosity about the world around them, helping them be successful in their examinations and beyond.

A Leadership Culture

- Students are empowered to take leadership roles, especially through the Leadership Ladder, School Council, House system and the Sixth Form Executive group
- A collaborative leadership community, driven by the Senior Leadership Team and Middle Leaders, develops where creative ideas are shared, contributing towards the school's vision
- Professional development for all staff is responsive to need and shares best practice through collaborative training networks

What does this mean?

Students and staff feel empowered to take leadership roles and are well supported in these roles, enabling individuals to 'make a difference' to their school and to the community.

Personalised Support and Guidance

- High quality mentoring provides personalised support for students' learning
- Peer mentoring promotes social cohesion across the school
- The curriculum offers well-tailored learning pathways which provide good progression

What does this mean?

All students feel known in the school community and there is a close understanding of each individual's needs which leads to appropriate support and high levels of achievement. Students fulfil their potential.

An Outward-Facing Learning Community

- Outreach work ensures the best of science, languages, arts, sports and business provision is available to students both in and outside of the school
- An understanding of different cultures and faiths promotes tolerance and respect

What does this mean?

Students have a wide choice of excellent enrichment and extra-curricular provision which increases their aspirations. As a school we help students understand events around the world as they unfold, especially through assemblies and our Ethos provision. Students are tolerant of difference and respectful of each other and their community. Our students are proud of their school.

The School Day

8.50am – 9.20am	Student Guidance Time
9.25am – 10.20am	Period 1
10.25am – 11.20am	Period 2
11.20am – 11.50am	Break
11.50am – 12.45pm	Period 3
12.45pm – 1.25pm	Lunch
1.25pm – 2.20pm	Period 4
2.25pm – 3.20pm	Period 5

Break and Lunch Times

There are two breaks in the school day. Our Catering team provides delicious and healthy hot meals and snacks using fresh ingredients, locally sourced when possible. We have several catering outlets open daily in Frideswide's Bistro, Sherwood Café and other key areas across the site. We operate a cashless catering system which reduces queueing time and allows parents to monitor what students are eating in school.

Curriculum

All students follow a common curriculum during their first two years.

In Year 7 and 8 there are smaller teaching groups for a number of subjects including Mathematics, English and Technology.

All students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have lessons in: **English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Computer Science, Dance (7&8 only), Drama, Geography, History, Languages, Music, Personal Development, Physical Education, Religious Education and Technology.**

All students in Years 10 and 11 follow a core curriculum in: **English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science (Combined or Single: Biology/Chemistry/Physics), History and/or Geography.** In addition, **Physical Education, Personal Development and Religious Education** are non-examined subjects unless PE and/or RE are chosen as GCSE options.

In addition to the core curriculum, students choose from a wide range of option subjects such as:

Art and Design (BTEC), Astronomy, Business Studies, Citizenship, Computer Science, Dance, Drama, Fine Art, Geography, Graphics, Health & Social Care (BTEC), History, Languages: (Spanish/German/French/Mandarin), Media Studies, Music, Physical Education, Psychology, Design and Technology, Religious Studies, Textiles.

One particular feature of the school is the rich variety of extra-curricular activities, which are well supported and add to the quality of the communal life of the school. There are numerous clubs and activities, ranging from musical and sporting activities to drama, science and technology. We regularly run trips to Spain, France, China and Germany. We also welcome exchange students from our twin-town of Plannegg.

Another distinctive feature of the school is the opportunities we provide for girls to take leadership roles through the vibrant School Council, the strong House system, our Prefect system, and a range of peer mentoring. The Leadership Ladder recognises and rewards our girls' participation in leadership roles and activities. We pride ourselves in enabling the girls to develop real confidence for life through this provision.

Partnership With Parents

We form a strong relationship with parents. At the beginning of each school year, there is an information evening about study habits, the curriculum and option choices for each year group. There are also subject report evenings when you will be able to meet your daughter's teachers and opportunities to meet her tutor.

We will keep you fully informed of your daughter's progress and we send home regular reports for you to see her targets and whether she is achieving them. All parents are invited to attend our Parent Forum meetings, held by the Senior Leadership Team to discuss proposals about how to improve the school further.

We also ask parents to complete an annual survey and the feedback you provide contributes towards our school development priorities. We have an active Friends of DGS group where parents, staff and friends of the school are invited to involve themselves in fund raising and running social events for the school community. Please see the school website for further details.

Your first port of call for any queries will be your child's tutor or our Student Manager Team, who are on hand throughout the day to answer any queries. Your daughter will also have a Student Planner and this will give you the details of homework, timetable etc and can be used to communicate with the tutor. Our website is also very useful as a source of key information; for example, staff lists, term dates and all our policies are to be found there.

Religious Education Provision

Girls take Ethics, Religion and Philosophy classes in Years 7 and 8. In Years 9, 10 and 11 girls study Religion, Philosophy and Ethics as part of a Personal Development programme of study and "super-learning" days. Girls can choose to take a full course Religious Studies GCSE as part of their examination subjects. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Ethics, Religion and Philosophy lessons or assembly for reasons of their religious convictions. In such cases, suitable alternative provision for self-study will be made. Parents must put in writing their intention to withdraw their daughter and the reasons for this decision.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND Provision)

The school promotes inclusion and works extremely hard to ensure that every girl's needs are met. There is a large, well-resourced SEND department and our SEND team is skilled in addressing various aspects of learning, behavioural and physical difficulties. Girls attend individual lessons, small group lessons or receive support in class as appropriate to their needs.

All students on the SEND register are regularly reviewed and parents are kept fully informed of progress. The SEND Department works in close partnership with families to achieve the best possible outcome for students.

Attendance

Research proves that students with high levels of attendance are more likely to succeed in school and go on to further and higher education than students with low levels of attendance. For this reason we check attendance carefully and report your daughter's attendance on a termly basis using a traffic light system so that you know how well she is doing. You are requested not to take your daughter out of school during term time as missing school can involve your daughter missing crucial learning and assessment points. The school's attendance policy is available on the school website.

Discipline

No school can work successfully without a clear discipline policy. Our policy is simple, effective and available for parents to view on the school website. We are a learning community, a calm place where there are no bells, no shouting and mutual respect characterises all relationships. We take a positive view of discipline and work on the basis that everybody can make good choices if they are guided towards them. There is a strong rewards policy in school with students awarded House Points, praise postcards, certificates and letters home.

The Headteacher, Heads of Year and Heads of House hold termly Celebration Breakfasts to recognise the achievement of our students and our Awards Evenings form a highlight of the school year.

Homework

This is set regularly and increases as students move through the school. There are clear homework policies in all subjects and the type of learning required can take many forms. Homework is set using the online Satchel Web Facility. This enables parents to see what homework is being set and to support their daughter in ensuring it is completed by the required deadline. We believe homework is good training for independent learning and consolidates learning in school.

Support and Challenge

We work tremendously hard to ensure that all of our new students are well supported both before they start and as they move through the school. The Head of Year 7 visits each primary school from Easter onwards to meet the girls coming to us and their teachers. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO) and Deputy SENDCO also visit the schools to ensure that we are fully briefed on any particular support that we need to put in place for individual students. Information about Advanced Learners (Able, Gifted and Talented students) is passed on to us from the primary schools and this is shared with our Advanced Learners Co-ordinator, Year 7 teachers, tutors and the Head of Year.

We run two induction days where girls spend time with us in the summer term enjoying taster lessons and participating in group activities, getting to know the school and each other. We also host an evening for girls and their parents in the summer term where Year 7 tutors are present to meet the new students and senior staff talk about some of the key aspects of joining the school.

Finally, a member of the Senior Leadership Team oversees this entire transition process to ensure students are given the best possible support as they start life as a Didcot Girls' School student.

Charging Policy

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits. Some are free to attend such as sports clubs, others will incur a cost. Full details of the Trust's Charging and Remissions Policy can be found at: www.ridgewayeducationtrust.co.uk/2667/ret-policies

Pupil Premium

Additional government funding is available to support the achievement of students whose families are experiencing significant financial hardship, for Looked After Children and for young people who are part of service families.

If you think your daughter might be entitled to this funding, it is extremely important that you contact your Head of Year so that we can claim this funding on your daughter's behalf and use it to support her achievement. For example, students entitled to Pupil Premium are eligible for financial support with school clubs, trips and additional instrumental lessons.

Sixth Form

Didcot Sixth Form is a vibrant mixed sixth form, shared between Didcot Girls' School and St Birinus School, drawing on the combined experience of the most expert teachers from both Didcot Girls' and St Birinus Schools. The sixth form is recognised locally as the sixth form of choice for an exceptional A-Level education, and admired for its warm, welcoming climate, and ambitious and respectful culture. The combined resources of two high-performing schools enable us to offer the broadest possible A-Level curriculum, a rigorous and varied enrichment and extra-curricular programme, and the pastoral benefits that arise from existing within a school environment. Please see the Didcot Sixth Form website for further information.

School Uniform

All Pupils

- **Maroon blazer with school badge**
- **White blouse with collar**
- **Plain navy blue trousers** – no combats, flares, drainpipe-style, 'skinny' trousers or leggings. No tight trousers; trousers must hang from hip. No exposed zips/studs on trousers
- **Plain navy blue knee-length pleated skirt** – Skirts should be worn in accordance with the uniform code
- **Socks, plain navy, black or white**
- **Tights, plain natural, navy or black**
- **Shoes must be black or navy with low heels** – sandals, trainers (including black leather), boots or backless shoes may not be worn. Canvas black pumps or trainers are not permitted. Toes must be covered by shoes
- **Coat or anorak suitable for cold/wet weather** – denim / corduroy / leather jackets, hooded sweatshirts, shackets or tracksuit tops are not permitted

Optional:

- **Navy V-necked jumper**
- **Headscarves** – plain navy blue, white or black. Headscarves should be folded under the chin, taken round to the back of the neck and the ends tucked in, to conform to health and safety requirements
- **Plain navy-blue salwar kameez**

Optional (Terms 5 and 6 only): Summer uniform

- Pale blue or navy polo shirt with school crest
- Navy Cardigan or V neck jumper (not black)
- Blazer may be worn

Didcot Girls' School uniform is available from:

Trutex Schoolwear and More, 14 Cockcroft Road, Didcot OX11 8LL. Tel: 01235 211011

PE Uniform – All Pupils

- Polo top – navy with open neck and school crest
- Shorts or Skirt – navy with school crest
- Sports trainers – with a cushioned sole
- Football boots, shin pads and long navy blue Football socks for Year 7 & 8
- PE socks – white or black trainer or ankle socks only
- Full Zip Training Top – navy with school crest
- Track Pants – navy
- Appropriate wear for Gymnastics is black or navy-blue sports leggings & a school PE polo top or PE Kit
- Tracksuit trousers – navy and water resistant
- Appropriate wear for Dance is black leggings and black T-shirt/vest/leotard or PE kit

- Footwear bag – any colour

Hair must be tied up and no jewellery should be worn. Appropriate wear for cold weather is black or navy-blue sports leggings underneath shorts or skirt. Black, white, navy or grey long sleeve t-shirt under PE polo top.

NB: Students taking part in Dance or Gymnastics, will be required to take part in bare feet.

NB: If students are taking part in Dance or Gymnastics, black leggings and a school PE polo top must be worn.

All items of PE uniform are available from Sportswear International

Other Equipment Required

- **Mathematics Set** (including pen, pencil, ruler, eraser, glue stick, protractor and compass)
- **Scientific Calculator** (Casio Model)
- **A white board pen**

Other Important Uniform Rules

Jewellery: One pair of earrings, studs or sleepers, may be worn: one small, plain earring (stud only) in the lobe. Ear 'stretchers' are not permitted. There are religious exceptions for some items. Please liaise with the Head of Year in these cases.

- **No other jewellery may be worn, just school-related badges** – A watch may be worn. Charity bracelets are not permitted. No nose, lip, eyebrow, tongue or stomach studs or other ear piercings. Clear plastic retainers are not permitted
- **Make-up, if worn, should be discreet:** False eyelashes, nail varnish, false nails, French manicure, Shellac polish are not permitted.
- **Headwear:** Baseball caps are not permitted; winter/summer hats should be removed inside.
- Henna tattoos are only permitted as part of a cultural celebration
- **No extremes of hair colour or hair style are permitted.** Only naturally occurring hair colour will be permitted

ALL EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORM MUST BE NAMED CLEARLY AND PERMANENTLY.

Bicycles

All bicycles must be locked in a school bike shed, and reflective bands and cycle helmets should be worn.

Please ensure that your daughter is visible and safe during dark winter months.

Admissions

After reading this prospectus, you may wish to discuss certain issues with us. We are always delighted to welcome visitors to Didcot Girls' School.

Please also visit the school website on www.didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk for further information about the school, including all of our policy documents.

As an academy, Oxfordshire County Council remains the admissions authority for the school and we follow the admissions rules for community schools.

To ensure that a place is reserved for your daughter at Didcot Girls' School, it is important to follow these procedures:

If your daughter is under the age of 11, you can select the school online at:

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/secondaryadmissions or complete a Common Application Form in October prior to their entry in the following September.

Contact details for the Admissions Team:

Admissions Team

County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

Tel: 0345 241 2487

admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

If your daughter is over the age of 11, contact our Admissions Officer, Kelly Ahmed, at the school to enquire about a place and also contact the Admissions Team to ensure that a place is available.

When a place has been confirmed, we will contact parents to advise them of the arrangements which have been made.

Appeals – As Didcot Girls' School is the only all girls' comprehensive school in Oxfordshire, we offer a unique educational provision and one which is increasingly popular with families from both within and outside the Didcot area. If your daughter is not allocated a place, parents have a legal right to appeal.

All school allocations are made according to our published admissions criteria.

In addition to pupils from the Didcot area partnership of primary schools who we work closely with throughout the year, many of our students come from surrounding villages such as Appleford, Aston Tirold, Aston Upthorpe, Blewbury, Chilton, East and West Hagbourne, Harwell, Long Wittenham, North Moreton, South Moreton, Rowstock and Upton. We also welcome students from further afield and run bespoke subsidised bus services picking up in places such as Wantage, Grove, Oxford, Berinsfield, Dorchester, Wallingford, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Burcot, Abingdon and Drayton.

What to do next...

Contact the school on: **01235 812092** to organise an individual visit.

Open Events: **Open events are scheduled in October, June and July.** Please visit our website at: **www.didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk/327/open-events-and-information-for-prospective-families** for more details.

Complete a Common Application Form and return it to your primary school. Complete the form online at:

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Address: Didcot Girls' School,
Manor Crescent, Didcot, OX11 7AJ

Telephone: 01235 812092

Website: www.didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk

Email: head.4139@didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk

Headteacher: Miss Georgina Littler

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Rachael Warwick

Chair of Governors:

Mr P Smith

Didcot Girls' School

Manor Crescent, Didcot OX11 7AJ

Key Stage 4 Results 2023

Performance of subjects 2023

Subject	Cohort	% 4+ 2023	% 4+ National Average 2023
English Language	275	92	72
English Literature	275	93	80
Mathematics	276	89	60
Biology	112	99	90
Chemistry	112	99	90
Physics	112	100	90
Combined Science	161	87	59
Art	45	89	83
Astronomy	21	71	*
Business Studies	100	82	69
Citizenship	31	84	72
Computing	30	83	71
Dance	22	95	*
Design and Technology	16	75	76
Drama	47	87	82
Further Maths	32	100	97
Geography	97	86	68
Graphics	45	82	83
History	152	76	67
Languages: French	38	92	75
Languages: German	39	92	80
Languages: Mandarin	41	93	*
Languages: Spanish	63	83	74
Media Studies	39	90	77
Music	30	77	81
PE	24	88	79
Psychology	71	80	*
Religious Studies	51	88	78
Textiles	13	85	*
BTEC Health & Social Care Award L2	25	76	*
BTEC Art & Design Award L2	19	47	*

*Not published

Key Stage 5 Results 2023

	Sixth Form
Number of students sitting exams	160
% of all entries gained A* grades	13%
% of all entries gained A*-A grades	34%
% of all entries gained A*-B grades	66%
% of all entries gained A*-C grades	86%
% of all entries gained A*-E grades	99%

Around half of our students join the Sixth Form on completion of their compulsory schooling. A wide range of A Level courses are offered. Our co-educational Sixth Form is run in partnership with the boys' school in Didcot, St Birinus, and our results are excellent year on year. The Didcot Sixth Form website is a good source of further information and a copy of the Didcot Sixth Form Prospectus is available from the school by request.

Governing Body 2022–23

Name	Responsibility	Appointment Type
Mrs L Major	Governance Officer	Clerk
Mr Paul Anstey		Parent
Mrs Teresa Brooke		Trust appointed
Mrs Cath Convery		Trust appointed
Mrs Smita Gadhur		Parent
Mrs Jill Judson	Vice Chair	Trust appointed
Mr Richard Kennell		Trust appointed
Miss Georgina Littler		Headteacher
Mr Robert Majilton		Staff
Mr Paul Smith	Chair	Trust appointed
Mrs Rachael Warwick		Executive Headteacher, Ridgeway Education Trust
Mr Philip Wong		Parent
Mrs Jen Wright		Trust appointed

The Chair and Vice Chairs may be contacted directly on: governors@didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk



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Manor Crescent
Didcot
Oxfordshire OX11 7AJ

Tel: 01235 812092
Email: head.4139@didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk
www.didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk

Didcot Girls' School is an academy managed by Ridgeway Education Trust, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales

Registered company number: 8104201

Registered address:
Didcot Girls' School, Manor Crescent,
Didcot, Oxon OX11 7AJ