



Didcot Girls' School

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Committed to Excellence

# Committed to Excellence



## About Us

At Didcot Girls' School, we share a deep commitment to our 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.

Our mission statement: We are a vibrant school community which empowers girls to become resilient and to fulfil their potential as future leaders.

The school's aim is to sustain an excellent learning environment where girls achieve their full potential and develop leadership qualities, through a personalised curriculum which meets the needs of every learner.

We are an 11–18 girls' school with a highly successful co-educational Sixth Form run in partnership with St Birinus School. We believe that all girls' education enables girls to flourish academically and socially so that they fulfil their potential and achieve excellence in all that they do both in school and beyond.



# Starting

Didcot Girls' School offers girls the opportunity to flourish in a creative, stimulating and aspirational learning environment.



## Didcot Girls' School

"THERE IS A GENUINE COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE AND A DETERMINATION TO INSTIL AMBITION, RESILIENCE AND LEADERSHIP IN STUDENTS."

OFSTED

"PUPILS SHOW REAL PRIDE. THEY ARE ENTHUSIASTIC, SELF-MOTIVATED AND READY TO LEARN."

OFSTED

Welcome to Didcot Girls' School. As the only all girls' comprehensive school in Oxfordshire we are proud of the opportunities we offer to all of our girls to develop in an environment which fosters resilience, promotes leadership and encourages a can-do ethos. Our co-educational Sixth Form, shared with St Birinus School, offers excellent progression for our girls to study in a vibrant and thriving Sixth Form community.

Our high-performing school is grounded in the strength of relationships between staff, students and parents. We work in partnership with our students who actively contribute to the running and decision-making of the school through a powerful School Council, the vibrant House system and a well-established, successful leadership programme which operates throughout the whole school. Our core values of mutual respect, inclusivity and high expectations underpin everything we do as a learning community which is truly 'committed to excellence'.

Standards of achievement are consistently very high, most recently placing us in the top five percent of schools in the country, and students of all abilities make excellent progress here. We are delighted that Ofsted has recognised this drive for excellence, evaluating the school as Outstanding following our most recent inspection. Teaching is creative and stimulating and our extra-curricular provision superb. Didcot Girls' School and St Birinus, the boys' school in Didcot, work together in a Multi-Academy Trust offering exciting opportunities to collaborate for students and staff, whilst maintaining what makes us successful and distinctive, single-sex environments.

Didcot Girls' School was originally designated as a Language College in 1997 and we continue to pride ourselves on the international dimension of our work which involves so many opportunities for students to travel abroad, learn about other cultures and to apply their language learning in real contexts. We value learning in all its forms and offer a curriculum personalised to meet the different and changing needs of our girls as they prepare for Higher and Further Education, the world of work, and adult life.

I am extremely proud to be the Headteacher of such a positive and aspirational school and I fully appreciate the privilege of leading such an outstanding community of students and staff. I encourage you to make a visit to see us in action; we all very much look forward to welcoming you to our school.

With very best wishes

**Georgina Littler**  
Headteacher



# Growing

Pastoral support systems in the school are excellent and ensure that each girl is quickly known as an individual and feels part of the school community.



Tutor groups meet for 30 minutes each morning and consist of students in the same year belonging to the same House. Year 10, 11 and Sixth Form students are involved in assisting tutors and running mentoring programmes for younger students during tutor time.

Heads of Year overview the progress and well-being of their year group, working alongside an expert team of tutors. Alongside year groups, we run an active House system with seven Houses: (Kate) Adie, (Darcy) Bussell, (Jessica) Ennis, (Susan) Greenfield, (Helena) Kennedy, (Ellen) MacArthur, and (Jacqueline) Wilson. The House system encourages both competition and the family feel of the school which is much commented on and praised by visitors.

We hold year assemblies once each week and House assemblies once each term. We encourage the development of thinking skills and reflection through active participation in these morning sessions. These activities help to build the ethos of our positive, engaged student body who are morally and socially aware, and often very active in improving their communities. A highlight of each term is the Whole School Assembly, where students share their achievements and successes and we celebrate the strong sense of community that makes our school such a supportive and stimulating place to grow.

Each year group is led either by a non-teaching Head of Year or a teaching Head of Year supported by a Student Manager who does not teach and is skilled at working alongside young people. These staff form the main contacts with parents and will work alongside families and students where further support is needed.



"THE PASTORAL SUPPORT IS EXCEPTIONAL. I HAVE WATCHED MY DAUGHTER BLOSSOM THIS YEAR. SHE FEELS SAFE AND SUPPORTED AND HER PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN EXTRAORDINARY."

YEAR 7 PARENT









# Challenging

We want our students to be challenged by all that they do, so that there is a vibrant and creative atmosphere which inspires us all.



“TEACHING IS FIRST RATE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM. PUPILS, IN ALL YEAR GROUPS, MAKE OUTSTANDING LEVELS OF PROGRESS.”

OFSTED

“THE MOST-ABLE PUPILS MAKE EXCELLENT PROGRESS ACROSS ALL THE SUBJECTS AND ATTAIN VERY WELL AT GCSE. THEIR NEEDS ARE SUPERBLY MET IN LESSONS.”

OFSTED

To achieve this, we have developed an innovative curriculum that allows every girl to thrive. In Years 7, 8 and 9 girls study a wide range of subjects which additionally secure the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills essential for lifelong success. All students follow an agreed core but are able to choose additional subjects from a variety of academic and vocational qualifications. Students and parents are guided towards the most appropriate learning pathway, depending on individual interest, future aspirations and ability.

We are particularly proud of the excellent links we have developed with the Smallpeice Trust and the Institute of Civil Engineers to provide access to first class experiences in engineering for all of our students.

The Study Café is open to our older students after school for additional revision sessions and our younger students benefit from a daily homework club.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENDCos) manage a team of Teaching Assistants who support girls, in and out of lessons, in different ways to ensure that we meet the needs of every individual student.

The Advanced Learners Coordinator monitors the progress of our most able students and oversees a programme of mentoring and extra-curricular activities providing additional challenge for these students.



# Developing

We recognise that although qualifications are very important, school is about much more than examinations. Our students benefit from a wide range of creative, sporting and cultural activities. We offer many clubs and societies which operate at lunch times and after school.

Our students enter competitions at county and national levels in debating, public speaking, sport, science, creative writing, maths challenges – the list goes on. We are national or county champions in football, netball, cricket, rounders and badminton. We benefit hugely from our links with the world-class science community within the local area and from our excellent partnerships with Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University.

Girls join the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at bronze or silver levels, play cricket, football, basketball, try fencing and write poetry. They can join clubs in Science, Drama, Maths, Dance, Computing, Art, Languages or, indeed, start a new club of their own. Highlights of the school year include the joint drama production with St Birinus School, the Music and Dance Concerts and the Art Exhibitions held in our own Freeborn Gallery – all of which receive wonderful reviews.

"A WIDE RANGE OF  
EXTRA-CURRICULAR  
OPPORTUNITIES  
ENRICHES STUDENTS'  
EXPERIENCES  
AND CONTRIBUTES  
TO THEIR WIDER  
DEVELOPMENT."

OFSTED

"THE SCHOOL'S  
WORK TO PROMOTE  
PUPILS' PERSONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
AND WELFARE IS  
OUTSTANDING."

OFSTED













# Travelling

As an International Award School we take our overseas visits very seriously, believing that they enrich our community, offering opportunities for girls to experience different cultures and ways of life.



“WHAT DO I LIKE BEST ABOUT THE SCHOOL? EVERYTHING! THERE IS SO MUCH TO DO AND ALL THE TEACHERS ARE BRILLIANT. I’M REALLY GLAD I CHOSE TO COME HERE.”

YEAR 7 STUDENT

“I FEEL INCREDIBLY FORTUNATE THAT MY DAUGHTER ATTENDS DIDCOT GIRLS’ SCHOOL.”

YEAR 10 PARENT

We run a large number of trips abroad, to China, Sweden, France, Poland and Spain, to name only a few. We have school exchanges to Germany and China and all of Year 7 travel to France for a long weekend each year. Travel in Britain is also encouraged and there are regular visits to museums, theatres, galleries, castles and coastal areas to make our curriculum come alive.

As a school which is passionate about languages, we create a wide range of opportunities for our students to welcome visitors from abroad, and to engage in real learning opportunities in the community which highlight the importance of languages in the world of work.

We encourage everybody to take part in visits during their school life. There is a special fund available for those who have financial difficulties.



# Preparing

Each girl is encouraged to develop independent learning skills. This prepares our students well for entry to our Sixth Form which is a joint venture with St Birinus Boys' School.

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.

"TEACHING IN THE SIXTH FORM IS PARTICULARLY STRONG...THE SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM BENEFITS FROM THE ECONOMIES OF SCALE ACHIEVED THROUGH PARTNERSHIP, WIDENING THE OFFER AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS FROM BOTH SCHOOLS."

OFSTED







# Celebrating

Within a stimulating and supportive environment, we promote leadership skills and encourage resilience and confidence. We take every opportunity to celebrate our students' successes.



The Head of Ethos drives our distinctive leadership culture across the school. Students are encouraged to take a wide range of leadership roles in the school from acting as guides on Open Evening, and participating in peer mentoring programmes, to sitting on the School Council, leading assemblies and acting as House Captains, Sports Captains, Prefects and Student Ambassadors. We use the Leadership Ladder to recognise leadership actions and to reward students for these. All students from Year 7 to Year 11 are included in the Leadership Ladder which aims to involve every young person in leadership participation.

We have a highly regarded rewards system of House Points and praise postcards, devised alongside the School Council, which operates across the school. In addition to this, we celebrate students' achievements with termly Celebration Breakfasts hosted by the Headteacher and Heads of Year. Students whose achievements warrant particular recognition are likely to also receive an invitation to share hot chocolate with the Head or Deputy Head. Each year we host awards evenings for Lower School, Upper School, Sixth Form and our Sports Awards Evening. Students' achievements are celebrated in Panorama, our termly newsletter, and via our excellent website.

We value our partnership with parents and work hard to keep everybody fully informed of their daughter's progress and successes. We work within the set of values, agreed by our students and promoted throughout the school, which are shared with you in the opening page of this prospectus. We are 'committed to excellence' in all that we do.

"PUPILS ARE  
CONSTANTLY  
CHALLENGED TO  
AIM HIGH. THEY ARE  
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OFSTED

"THE AMBITION FOR  
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A 'VALUES-DRIVEN'  
ETHOS ARE ROOTED  
IN A COMMITMENT  
TO EQUALITY."

OFSTED



# Didcot Girls' School

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At Didcot Girls' School, we recognise our moral, ethical and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of students. We are fully committed to ensuring that consistent and effective safeguarding procedures are in place to support families, young people and staff at school.

The school's full Safeguarding Policy is available on the school website.

Didcot Girls' School is an academy managed by Ridgeway Education Trust.

A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales.

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