

Daegu Science High School for the Gifted

Daegu, South Korea



A nationwide boarding magnet for young scientists, running a research-centered curriculum since its 2011 shift to gifted-academy status.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	67/100
Academic outcomes	74/100
University placement	73/100
Prestige & heritage	68/100
Alumni network	52/100
Facilities	63/100
Transparency	50/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Daegu Science High School for the Gifted occupies a narrow, serious niche: a state science high school for academically exceptional pupils who want depth before breadth. Founded in ****1988**** and restructured in ****2011**** as a gifted academy, it operates as a boarding school for ages ****15-18**** with Korean as the declared curriculum and Korean and English as languages of instruction. That combination matters. This is not a broad international school with science strengths on the side; it is a specialist institution built around advanced maths, science and research habits. For the right student, that focus is **intellectually exacting**, **single-minded** and **hard to replicate** elsewhere.

What puts it on a shortlist is the clarity of purpose. Families looking for a conventional all-round secondary experience, expansive arts provision or a socially relaxed campus culture should look elsewhere. Daegu Science High School is for pupils who want to live among academic peers, work at pace and treat science not as a favourite subject but as the organising principle of school life. Boarding strengthens that culture: students are not dipping into enrichment after lessons, they are living inside an environment designed to sustain inquiry, competition and sustained study. The attraction is obvious for a teenager who finds standard schooling too slow, wants research exposure early and thrives on *serious academic pressure*.

The school's market position is strongest within South Korea's selective science-school landscape rather than the mainstream international-school market. For international families, the key limitation is equally clear: the curriculum is Korean, and the school's academic life sits inside that national framework. English is a language of instruction, but this is not an English-medium international programme built for easy transfer across borders. That narrows the pool sharply. It also preserves what the school does best: a *research-driven* education for students who are already strong in STEM, resilient in a boarding setting and motivated by *intense intellectual company*. Parents should shortlist it if they want a specialist launchpad, not a polished all-purpose school.

STRENGTHS

- Officially designated a national science gifted academy (국립과학고등학교) by the education ministry, converting from science-high-school status in 2008-2011, giving it a distinct legal and funding footing above ordinary science high schools.
- Admits on a nationwide basis with a fully boarding structure, so the intake is drawn from across South Korea rather than only the local Daegu catchment.
- Graduates typically progress to KAIST, POSTECH and Seoul National University, reflecting a long-standing STEM-focused pipeline into Korea's top technical universities.
- One of Korea's original science high schools, founded in 1987, giving it decades of institutional history in gifted science education.
- Small, tightly managed cohort size (roughly 90-99 new students a year) keeps class sizes low relative to mainstream Korean high schools.

TRADE-OFFS

- Instruction and all official communication is conducted entirely in Korean, with no meaningful English-language pages or support identified for international families.
- Entry is highly competitive: the 2026 intake drew 586 applicants for 90 places nationwide, a ratio of about 6.5 to 1, filtered from an already elite pool of middle-schoolers.
- The curriculum is narrowly focused on mathematics and science; there is little evidence of breadth in humanities, arts or non-STEM electives.
- Students who later pivot toward medicine, dentistry or pharmacy face structural disadvantages, including recalculated GPA methods and removal of third-year activity records, making the school a poor fit for families keeping medical school open as an option.

ADMISSIONS

Entry is at age 15 (post-middle-school) via a three-stage nationwide process: document/records screening, a creative problem-solving written assessment in maths and science, and a camp-style interview evaluating creativity, aptitude and character. About 90 places (plus a small quota-outside allowance) are offered annually, with a reserved number for Daegu-region applicants. Competition is intense, running around 5.5-7 applicants per place in recent cycles. Applicants intending to pursue medicine, dentistry or pharmacy face explicit institutional disincentives, a distinctive feature of this school's admissions culture.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_f9d1ebc39a.