



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report**

**Durston House School**

**October 2022**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Durston House School			
<b>DfE number</b>	307/6000			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	294670			
<b>Address</b>	Durston House School 12-14 Castlebar Road Ealing London W5 2DR			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8991 6530			
<b>Email address</b>	info@durstonhouse.org			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Giles Entwisle			
<b>Co-chairs of governors</b>	Mr David Henshall Mr Kevin Mahoney			
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 13			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	328			
	<b>Pre-prep</b>	98	<b>Junior school</b>	85
	<b>Middle and upper school</b>	145		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18 to 20 October 2022			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Durston House School is an independent day school for male pupils. It was founded in 1886 and is overseen by a governing body. The school comprises three sections, each of which is situated on a separate site in Ealing in close proximity to the others: pre-prep, for pupils aged 4 to 7 years, junior school, for pupils aged 7 to 9 years, and middle and upper school, for pupils aged 9 to 13 years.
- 1.2 The current headteacher took up his position in September 2020.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to provide an education of quality and variety and prepare pupils well for entry to senior school. It aims to give each pupil a balanced education, helping them to attain excellence in academic, creative and physical pursuits, whilst guiding their social, moral and spiritual development. The school intends to provide a warm and caring environment within which security and happiness are paramount.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils come from local families representing a range of professional and business backgrounds. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of pupils on entry to the school is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 40 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and other conditions, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for seven pupils, all of whom receive additional support for their English. The school has identified 35 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 13 other pupils because of their particular talents in mathematics, English, science, music, art and sport.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.6 The school promotes effectively principles and values which facilitate the personal development of pupils as tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 Whilst the school promotes principles and values designed to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour, older pupils do not have faith that such principles and values, particularly those of fairness and respect, are implemented in practice. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils did not agree that the school treats pupils fairly. This perspective was stated by most older pupils who spoke with the inspectors and by many older pupils who submitted comments in response to the questionnaire. This related in particular to the way in which the behaviour policy is implemented.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in paragraph 5 is not met.**

### **Action point 1**

<p><b>The school must ensure that it implements effectively all the principles and values that it promotes, particularly those of fairness and respect [paragraph 5(a) and 5(b)(iii)].</b></p>
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### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 The school does not promote good behaviour effectively. In particular, it does not ensure that pupils feel that the school implements its behaviour policy consistently. Most older pupils who spoke to the inspectors strongly expressed this view. A minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire did not agree that pupils are kind and respect each other. Most older pupils who spoke to the inspectors

and many older pupils who submitted comments in response to the questionnaire also conveyed this view.

- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 7, and 10–16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but that in paragraph 9 [behaviour] is not met.**

## Action point 2

**The school must ensure that pupils consider the behaviour policy to be implemented consistently and effectively [paragraph 9(b)].**

## PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

## PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

**PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 2.20 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

**Action point 3**

**The proprietor must ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].**



### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

**The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

#### Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils make rapid progress. They attain well beyond average compared to those taking the same tests nationally.
- Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are outstanding.
- Pupils exhibit extremely positive attitudes towards learning and achievement.
- Pupils' communication and numeracy skills are excellent across the school.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

- Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative skills.
- Pupils show an outstanding appreciation of diversity.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe, including when online.
- Pupils do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of when banter might become disrespectful or unkind behaviour, or of the importance of challenging disrespectful behaviour.

#### Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Strengthen pupils' understanding of when banter might become disrespectful or unkind behaviour and of the importance of challenging disrespectful behaviour and alerting staff to it.

#### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 Pupils' achievement is excellent. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data confirm that pupils of all ages attain well beyond age-related expectations. Children in the EYFS make fast progress over time across all areas of learning. Pupils with SEND typically attain equivalently to their peers. This is because leaders make highly effective use of assessment data to identify pupils' needs and provide appropriate support and challenge. Pupils' books demonstrate fast progress across the range of subjects and knowledge and understanding beyond that expected for their age. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress. Inspection evidence supports this view. The school fully meets its aim to provide an education of quality and variety and prepare pupils well for entry to senior school.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are outstanding. Children in the EYFS demonstrated clear and well-controlled singing of harvest songs, exhibiting effective consideration of rhythm and volume. Older pupils show excellent knowledge of infinitives in French. In a theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) lesson, pupils exhibited an excellent awareness of current affairs, in particular the impact of the war in Ukraine on refugees. In art, other pupils exhibited competent artistic skills when creating a collage. In a geography lesson, older pupils correctly concluded that a 2D image could not be used to show height or relief on a map. As a result, they were able to determine layer shading, contour lines and spot heights as well as naming and using a large number of Ordnance Survey map symbols with confidence. A small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that most lessons are interesting. Inspectors found that most lessons engaged pupils' attention and stimulated them well. Teachers promote pupils' knowledge and understanding very effectively through high levels of challenge, probing questioning and by encouraging pupils to make links across the curriculum.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes towards learning and achievement. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors demonstrated high aspirational attitudes. In almost all lessons seen, pupils displayed very high levels of concentration and focus. Younger pupils and EYFS children were very eager to join in the harvest practice and try to sing well. Older pupils worked very conscientiously in lessons ranging from history and geography to mathematics. They are keen to answer questions and share their suggestions and very willing to accept constructive feedback and challenge from their peers and teaching staff. Pupils' interest and motivation are promoted through an effective mixture of collaborative and individual work in lessons and the use of praise by senior leaders and staff.
- 3.8 Pupils exhibit advanced communication skills for their age. Children in the EYFS spoke articulately, using long, well-constructed sentences. In an English lesson, younger pupils were able to identify spelling mistakes and grammatical errors well. Older pupils demonstrated excellent fluent reading skills when reading aloud from the novel *Holes*. Pupils near the top of the school were able to identify several literary devices used in *A Christmas Carol*, such as personification, hyperbole and metaphor. They read a passage from the book articulately, with much feeling and clear understanding. When asked about the text, the pupils talked about what was being revealed about the character of Scrooge very maturely. Pupils' writing, including that in French, is very clear, tidy and well-laid out. Younger pupils are able to plan their story writing highly effectively before composing stories featuring excellent use of adjectives and correct punctuation and grammar. The oldest pupils are able to record their deep analysis of poetic devices in clear extended sentences. Pupils are supported well when engaging with demanding texts. They are encouraged to use varied and interesting language in their writing.
- 3.9 Pupils' numeracy skills are excellent. Children in the EYFS exhibited a strong interest in pattern and length in the way that they manipulated and arranged plastic cubes. Children could explain different ways to add up to six, and some counted to 49 correctly without any support. Younger pupils were able to explain the mathematical methods they used to solve addition and subtraction problems. Pupils in the middle of the school show highly developed algebraic skills, demonstrating knowledge and understanding well beyond their age. They were able to explain divisibility rules for numbers such as 6 and 9 or 4 and 8 with excellent fluency. The oldest pupils' mathematics books demonstrate advanced mathematical competency and high results in mathematical assessments.
- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate competent information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They are able to use programming effectively to create simple text-based games and interactive quizzes. Some pupils have used a programme to compose music, incorporating strong knowledge of music theory. Pupils explained that they use websites that the school gives them to do their research. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors explained sensible techniques that they used to determine the extent to which different websites were reliable sources of information. Pupils' work includes simple block-based coding, animations and mathematical games.
- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate strong study skills. Children in the EYFS spontaneously stated that they needed to listen and concentrate well to achieve their desired results. Pupils in the middle of the school demonstrated excellent deductive skills when discussing the impact of written evidence or lack of it

on their understanding of aspects of Roman history. The oldest pupils' individual curriculum extension opportunity projects include examples of excellent independent research skills, such as a thoughtful consideration of the rights and wrongs of euthanasia, and an exploration of technology in cricket. Teachers teased out hypotheses from pupils and challenged these appropriately in a number of lessons seen across the curriculum. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. Inspection evidence supports this view. Study skills lessons enable pupils to develop strongly their own personal organisation skills and appreciation of the value of putting effort into work.

- 3.12 Pupils' academic and other achievements are excellent. Leavers are extremely successful in achieving places at highly selective senior schools, with a large number achieving academic, music and sports scholarships. Pupils have achieved regional sporting success in hockey and strong success in football, rugby, cricket, tennis and athletics. This has been promoted by leaders' and governors' provision and support of a comprehensive sports programme. Entrants attain high standards in ABRSM music awards. Pupils' skills develop as a result of specialist teaching and many opportunities to participate in the school choir and orchestra and events such as a bi-annual sports activity trip to Barcelona. The school fully meets its aim to give all pupil a balanced education, helping them to attain excellence in academic, creative and physical pursuits.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative skills. EYFS children conducted their song movements with much care and consideration for others in the room. In a mathematics lesson, pupils in the middle of the school worked together extremely well to consider what the concept of 'algebra' means. Younger pupils worked together very effectively to plan a re-telling of the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*, taking turns to write whilst sensitively highlighting ways in which others could improve their writing. Pupils play and spend time well together during break and lunchtime. In a history lesson, older pupils conducted paired discussion extremely well, speaking with confidence and arguing against each other's views courteously. This is because staff convey clear expectations of how discussions are to be conducted and often give pupils the opportunity to work in pairs and find solutions together.
- 3.15 Pupils show an excellent appreciation of diversity. EYFS children's work on the theme 'This is me' displayed their appreciation of their peers' different identities, appearances and cultural backgrounds. Pupils' discussion of their display on different languages spoken in the school conveys a strong celebration of the diversity of the school's community. Year 7 pupils talked very intelligently and with feeling in a TRP lesson about the application or otherwise of human rights in different countries. Year 8 pupils analysed with sensitivity the poem *Caged Bird* and its messages about the importance of racial freedom.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. Younger pupils' strong understanding of the importance of healthy eating was evident in a display on dietary options. The study skills books of pupils in the middle of the school exhibit their understanding of the importance of sufficient sleep and keeping hydrated. They determined very sensibly how the diet of Roman soldiers affected their capacity to fight and remain healthy. Younger pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that teachers ensured that they understood how to travel down the stairs and walk down the street safely. Older pupils who spoke to the inspectors gave sensible advice about how to keep themselves safe online. They talked about the importance of good mental health and explained the sensible strategies that they could use to help reduce any anxiety or stress. Leaders' assemblies and the school's personal, social, health, moral and economic education (PSHME) programme develop pupils' understanding of the importance of good physical and mental health and of how to keep themselves safe. The school meets its aim to provide a warm and caring environment.

- 3.17 Pupils' self-confidence is excellent. For instance, EYFS children are very confident to settle to activities on arrival, demonstrating very high levels of happiness and security. In a study skills lesson, pupils in the middle of the school demonstrated a substantial understanding of how habits of organisation and self-discipline could impact on their learning and performance. In a PSHME lesson, the oldest pupils reflected on their future selves thoughtfully, demonstrating much knowledge of their own strengths and aspirations for the future. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors demonstrated much confidence in the way they articulated their thoughts and achievements. They said that they felt confident because their teachers taught them well. Other pupils who spoke to the inspectors conveyed a strong self-understanding of their own academic strengths and areas for development. Children's and pupils' confidence develops strongly as a result of warm, encouraging and enthusiastic teaching.
- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate advanced spiritual development for their age. For example, pupils' PSHME books contain thoughtful consideration of the value of different forms of family and friendship. Pupils in the middle of the school explained how daydreams made them feel nostalgic and 'like a summer's day'. Older pupils' TPR work includes very thoughtful reflection on the possible nature of God and the ideas of omnipotence, omnibenevolence and omnipresence. In one TPR lesson, they were able to express ideas about humanity's stewardship of the earth, explaining that we should look after it, as well as use it for our benefit. In discussion with inspectors, older pupils considered deeply different viewpoints about existence from Christian, Muslim and atheist perspectives. Pupils' depth of reflection comes about because teachers engage pupils with challenging questions, such as whether the need to care for the environment is a matter of obedience to God or of survival. Teachers encourage pupils to consider the relationship between their own beliefs and contemporary issues.
- 3.19 Pupils show strong decision-making skills. For example, EYFS children exhibited much sustained concentration on their self-decided activities, showing that these had been chosen well. Younger pupils chose the level of challenge of work very sensibly during a mathematics lessons. Older pupils spoke very positively of the way school council makes decisions on behalf of others. In a history lesson, when challenged to 'think like a historian', pupils in the middle of the school made intelligent choices of different sources of information to support their conclusion about how King Harold died during the Battle of Hastings. Older pupils explained to the inspectors how they decide which revision and examination preparation techniques to use in order to do well.
- 3.20 Pupils contribute well to others in and beyond the school. They choose which local, national and international charities to support, such a local food bank and a children's medical charity. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger ones when different year groups are working together. Older pupils who spoke to the inspectors talked about the importance of acting as good role models to younger ones. Leaders encourage pupils to take on roles of responsibility and represent others through initiatives such as school council, house captains and prefects. This leads to a development of pupils' sense of responsibility towards others. For example, during a TPR lesson, older pupils related their study of Moses and the Israelites to current refugee crises, focusing on the need to help others and asking how they could contribute.
- 3.21 Pupils understand in principle the importance of values and behaviours such as respect and kindness and are capable of showing these. For example, pupils exhibited positive behaviour in the lessons seen. However, a minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire and most older pupils who spoke to the inspectors disagreed that pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. Inspectors found that pupils' understanding of when banter might become disrespectful or unkind behaviour is limited. Pupils do not always appreciate the potential for jokes meant without malice to cause distress or discomfort to others. They do not always understand the importance of challenging disrespectful behaviour and alerting staff to it. The school only partially meets its aim to guide this aspect of pupils' social, moral and spiritual development.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the co-chairs of governors and another governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Steven Popper	Reporting inspector
Mrs Diane Durrant	Compliance team inspector (Former deputy head, SofH school)
Mr Jonathon Anderson	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Neil Chippington	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)