



Material Change Inspection Report

Dulwich Prep London

November 2023

School's details

School	Dulwich Prep London			
DfE number	210/6001			
Registered charity number	1174356			
Address	Dulwich Prep London 42 Alleyn Park Dulwich London SE21 7AA			
Telephone number	0208 766 5500			
Email address	information@dulwichpreplondon.org			
Head Master	Miss Louise Davidson			
Chair of governors	Mrs Kate Kelleher			
Proprietor	Dulwich Prep London			
Age range	3 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	810			
	Day pupils	810	Boarders	0
	EYFS	136	Pre-Prep	148
	Prep	526		
Date of inspection	21 November 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Dulwich Prep London is an independent day school for male pupils aged 3 to 13 years and female pupils aged 3 to 4 years. It was founded in 1885 and is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. The school comprises an early years setting, pre-prep, and prep. The early years accommodation is situated on a separate site near the main school premises.
- 1.2 The school has 162 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom one has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 65 pupils. The school's most recent inspections were a regulatory compliance inspection in September 2022 and a material change inspection in May 2023.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.3 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase its total number of pupils from 900 to 999; and to change the age range of pupils to include female pupils aged 2 to 4 and male pupils from the ages of 2 to 16. The school has very recently received approval for a flexi-boarding facility and boarding was not included in the scope of this inspection. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework. The inspection considered additional concerns at the request of the DfE.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum), 2A (relationships and sex education), 3 (teaching) and 4 (framework for pupils' performance)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18-21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23-29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met

Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum, relationships and sex education (RSE), teaching and framework for pupils' performance [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The school implements a suitable curriculum, supported by comprehensive schemes of work which provide pupils with experience in all required areas of learning. The curriculum is suitably adapted, and teaching is planned to take account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including children in early years. Staff understand the demands of teaching to GCSE or equivalent level. The school has an appropriate relationships curriculum for primary-aged pupils and follows a suitable commercial RSE programme for secondary-aged pupils which extends to meet effectively the needs of pupils up to the age of 16. It has effective plans for providing careers advice to senior age pupils and is planning effectively to extend these for pupils up to the age of 16. The school ensures teaching which enables good progress. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is implemented. This includes arrangements to assess the progress of children in the early years towards their early learning goals. Senior leaders have effective plans to appoint suitably experienced teachers, and have appropriate curriculum plans in place, for the envisaged changes in age range.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those with protected characteristics. On occasion, some pupils do not demonstrate a strong understanding of how their own use of language can convey discrimination. The school is taking suitable and effective action to ensure that pupils consistently treat each other with respect, in particular those with protected characteristics. Senior leaders ensure that the use of any discriminatory language by pupils is challenged strongly. The school ensures that principles are actively promoted which encourage pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. These are promoted effectively through lessons and assemblies. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged changes in age range.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.5 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.6 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.7 The school meets the standard.
- 2.8 Implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for the needs of pupils, including for children in early years. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers and changes in age range.

- 2.9 Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively to safeguard children at risk and those in particular need. Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities, including with regard to child-on-child abuse. All behavioural issues and allegations of sexualised behaviour, racism or bullying, are treated as potential safeguarding concerns and addressed appropriately.
- 2.10 Staff, including senior leaders, listen to the concerns of pupils effectively. Pupils confirmed this to be the case and say that the school responds to any issues they raise promptly and takes action when necessary. Records, which are suitably thorough confirm this. The school communicates and refers concerns swiftly and appropriately to pertinent external agencies when appropriate and seeks advice when necessary. The school liaises appropriately with parents about any safeguarding concerns. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and the school has appropriate controls of the use of technology.
- 2.11 The safeguarding policy gives contact details as required for local safeguarding partners. The training for those with specific safeguarding responsibilities is in line with local requirements and statutory advice and is up to date. Staff confirmed that they are trained regularly. There are comprehensive records of face to face and online training which confirm suitable courses have been completed. Staff demonstrate effective knowledge of safeguarding procedures, including most recent changes to statutory guidance. They are aware of how to listen to children and report any concerns that they have.
- 2.12 Leaders and staff demonstrate appropriate awareness of the staff code of conduct. The code includes suitable guidance on the conduct of staff towards parents and within the local community and this is followed. Staff have a suitable understanding of the low-level concerns policy and safeguarding procedures, including the thresholds for reporting issues or incidents, and are confident to use these.
- 2.13 Safeguarding procedures include suitable arrangements for handling allegations against staff or senior leaders, and potential misconduct; these cover seeking immediate advice from the local authority designated safeguarding officer (LADO). The school understands its role in reporting any person to relevant statutory bodies if circumstances require it.
- 2.14 Governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. A governor with appropriate expertise maintains a close working contact with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Governors are suitably pro-active in the school with regards to monitoring safeguarding policies and procedures, including through arrangements for an annual review. This is sufficient to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

- 2.15 The school meets the standard.
- 2.16 There is an appropriate health and safety policy which is implemented effectively to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors. Records show that testing of all utilities is carried out regularly and systematically. Training is comprehensive and staff confirmed that they understand the importance of referring any concerns. Senior leaders and governors monitor any trends in implementing health and safety requirements and appropriate steps are taken to mitigate any recurrence of any health and safety issues. Health and safety considerations have been integrated effectively into the planning of the repurposing, and extension, of the current premises necessary to meet the needs of the increased age range of pupils. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers and wider age range.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.

2.18 The school has a fire safety policy which includes the elimination or reduction of risks from dangerous substances. A fire risk assessment of all current buildings has been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Fire procedures are understood by, and training provided for, staff. Termly fire drills are carried out and recorded and pupils are suitably informed about evacuation procedures. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers and changes in age range.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

2.19 The school meets the standard.

2.20 Pupils are properly supervised by qualified and trained staff, including at break times and in outside play. Suitable ratios of staff to pupils are maintained in early years. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase of pupil numbers and changes in age range.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

2.21 The school meets the standard.

2.22 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy which is implemented effectively. Staff conduct appropriate risk assessments for each area of the school, for trips out of school and for the wellbeing of pupils with particular needs. Appropriate risk assessments are put in place to reduce risks following any safeguarding incidents. Daily checks and risk assessments of the early years setting are carried out which effectively identify any potential problems and resolve them. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers and changes in age range.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

2.23 The school meets the standards.

2.24 All the required checks on staff, supply staff, and governors are carried out and completed before they take up their posts. Contractors send the school up-to-date information on checks they have undertaken on their employees, and the school makes appropriate further checks on arrival. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers.

2.25 The school maintains correctly an accurate single central register of appointments which includes the dates on which all checks have been completed.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 29]

2.26 The school meets the standards.

2.27 Adequate toilet facilities, suitable changing and showering facilities 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; and water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. The early years room created for children aged 2 is sufficiently spacious. Suitable plans are in place to accommodate sleeping children and to provide hygienic changing facilities for any children who are in nappies. The provision, including re-purposed accommodation, additional classrooms and refurbished and additional toilet facilities, is likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in pupil numbers and changes in age range.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.28 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

- 2.29 The school meets the standard.
- 2.30 The school's complaints procedure is available on the school website and includes required additional measures for early years. It provides for complaints and concerns to be considered on an informal basis; for the establishment of a formal procedure; for a complaint to be made in writing; for an additional hearing before a panel which includes an independent member and allows for a parent to be accompanied; for the panel to make findings and recommendations; and for a confidential record to be kept of findings. Suitable records of complaints are kept and these show that the school follows its own policy appropriately. Formal complaints are handled by senior leaders in line with the school's procedures. If they concern the head, then an appropriate alternative figure of suitable seniority handles the complaint. Whether or not a complaint has been upheld, the school undertakes a detailed review to identify any lessons to be learned from it and implements any consequent recommendations effectively.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.31 The school meets the standard.
- 2.32 Senior leaders and governors monitor safeguarding and welfare arrangements appropriately and carry out effective oversight of compliance with the regulatory standards. They fulfil their responsibilities so that independent school standards are met consistently. The strategic and operational planning for the proposed changes in the age range and increased number of pupils includes provision of extra safeguarding and other roles, and actively promotes the wellbeing of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended the school's request to increase its numbers to 999 and to change its age range to accept female pupils aged 2 to 4 and male pupils from the ages of 2 to 16 be approved.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.