



**Material Change Inspection Report**

**Durston House School**

**November 2023**

## 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>Headmaster</b>	Mr Giles Entwisle			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Kevin Mahoney			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Durston House Educational Trust			
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 13			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	387			
	<b>Pre-Prep</b>	59	<b>Juniors</b>	257
	<b>Seniors</b>	71		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	7 November 2023			

## 1. Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Durston House is an independent day school for male pupils in Ealing. The school comprises three sections, which are located in separate buildings in close proximity: the pre-prep which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage setting (EYFS) for pupils aged 3 to 5 years; juniors for pupils in Years 1 to 6; and seniors for pupils in Years 7 and 8. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a governing body. The school has 42 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 25 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in October 2022, followed by a progress monitoring inspection in May 2023.

### Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to become co-educational following an amalgamation with an adjacent school for female pupils, with consequent addition to the school's existing premises through use of buildings in Castlebar Road. This has also resulted in a change to the age range of pupils from 4 to 13 to 3 to 13. 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.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 2 (curriculum)	<b>Met</b>
Part 1, paragraph 2A (relationships and sex education)	<b>Met</b>
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	<b>Met</b>
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	<b>Met</b>
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 29 (premises of and accommodation at schools)	<b>Met</b>
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	<b>Met</b>
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	<b>Met</b>

## 2. Inspection findings

### Quality of education provided – curriculum [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 The school has a suitable written curriculum policy which is supported by schemes of work and planning which take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of female and male pupils, including those with SEND. In preparation for the amalgamation, staff with subject responsibilities held effective meetings to compare the two schools' programmes of study and as a result reworked some areas of the curriculum to avoid repetition. Staff also gave suitable consideration to necessary changes that were needed to enable teaching to meet the needs of female pupils. Staff have a secure understanding of any areas where transferring pupils might need additional short-term support. To facilitate the progress of pupils transferring with additional needs, effective meetings have been held with their parents. Suitable individual learning plans have been drawn up. The school has incorporated preparation for 11+ screening tests for female pupils into its existing arrangements for male pupils. Staff understand the specific requirements of senior girls' schools.
- 2.3 Pupils across the school follow a suitably broad curriculum with an effective focus on core skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. From Year 5 subjects are taught by specialist teachers. Female pupils reported that they appreciate the enthusiasm and subject knowledge this affords. Throughout the school both male and female pupils follow a games curriculum which includes an appropriately wide range of sports. Children in the EYFS from the age of three follow an appropriate programme of activities which has regard to the EYFS framework. This has been planned to prepare them as they move through the EYFS for more formal education in Year 1.
- 2.4 The curriculum enables all pupils to make progress according to their abilities and to develop an understanding of their individual interests and aptitudes. Following an audit of teaching materials, governors provided appropriate resources to support effective teaching and to meet the learning needs and interests of both male and female pupils. Pupils follow a suitable programme of personal, social, health moral and economic education (PSHME) which, in encouraging respect and tolerance for all, supports the school's ethos and fundamental British values. All pupils, particularly the oldest ones, are introduced effectively to careers opportunities through guest speakers, some of whom are parents. Older pupils, including the recently arrived female pupils, take part in a mentoring programme which helps to prepare them for senior school and develops their leadership skills. This supports their awareness of the opportunities they will have in the next stage in their education and life in British society.
- 2.5 The school's arrangements are likely to continue to meet the needs of pupils following the move to co-education.

### Quality of education provided – relationships and sex education (RSE) [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 2A]

- 2.6 Every pupil in the school is provided with appropriate relationships education through the PSHME curriculum. In Years 7 and 8, sex education is included as part of learning about relationships and personal identity. This learning is in accordance with statutory guidance. The school has consulted with parents when constructing its scheme of work and publishes its policy on the website. The RSE programme incorporates respect, rights and responsibilities. Pupils are allowed to be excused from the sex education element of this curriculum should a parent request this, and the school maintains dialogue with parents to help them understand the objectives of this programme. Relationships

education is taught by class teachers until Year 3 and then by specialist teachers. The school has planned arrangements effectively so that specific sex education topics will be taught to male and female pupils separately.

- 2.7 The school's arrangements are likely to continue to meet the needs of pupils following the move to co-education.

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

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.

2.9 Pupils in the school come from a wide variety of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds and the school places appropriate importance on promoting respect and understanding within its diverse community. The school continues to embed its new behaviour policy, the aim of which is to promote positive behaviour through respect and understanding, both of self and others. Staff report that the co-education is enabling male and female pupils to develop their social skills, discovering what they hold in common as well as their differences. This is confirmed by inspection evidence gained through observation and discussions with pupils. Female pupils demonstrated that they can confidently express their opinions in a mixed environment. All pupils agreed that they usually work and play together successfully.

- 2.10 The school's arrangements are likely to continue to meet the needs of pupils following the move to co-education.

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

#### **Safeguarding policy**

- 2.11 The school meets the requirements.

2.12 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**

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.

2.14 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including children in the EYFS, are implemented effectively. Staff are trained at an appropriate level for their responsibilities and understand their training with regard to identifying and reporting concerns. This includes general concerns relating to pupils' behaviour and wellbeing which are recorded to enable any patterns to be identified. Safeguarding is effectively managed. Members of the designated safeguarding team have undertaken higher level training and attend local safeguarding partner meetings to ensure they have an effective knowledge of inter-agency arrangements. Records confirm the school responds promptly to safeguarding concerns, monitors pupils and refers to external agencies as necessary. Records have been effectively merged following the amalgamation.

2.15 The school promotes a culture of listening to pupils. Both male and newly arrived female pupils stated that they can share a concern with a form teacher or other adult in school, confident they would be listened to. Pupils may also raise concerns through an anonymous online reporting tool. Records confirm that the school responds to pupils quickly, taking appropriate action when necessary. Pupils are given suitable guidance on staying safe online and the school has sufficient filtering and monitoring procedures in place to ensure appropriate use of technology, including when portable school devices are used for homework.

- 2.16 Suitable arrangements are in place to handle allegations against adults working with pupils and these are implemented effectively, including liaison with external agencies. This includes seeking advice from the LADO when necessary. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct which has been effectively presented to staff new to the school because of the amalgamation. Staff have a suitable understanding of the importance of keeping safeguarding at the forefront of their behaviour around pupils.
- 2.17 Governors are suitably trained in safeguarding. They maintain an experienced oversight of safeguarding arrangements through the designated safeguarding governor's effective liaison with the safeguarding team and regular reviews of safeguarding policy and practice brought via the education and welfare committee to the full board.
- 2.18 The school's arrangements are likely to continue to meet the needs of pupils following the move to co-education.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 Governors and senior leaders ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy. This policy provides staff with suitable guidance on health and safety matters. In preparation for the amalgamation, the school carried out extensive works to buildings to make them suitable for their purpose, taking into account the ages of pupils they serve. The school keeps appropriate records of health and safety checks, and these confirm that the accommodation, services and equipment are maintained at suitable intervals. The school's health and safety committee which reports to the governors' estates committee, monitors the efficiency of health and safety matters in the school. The newly refurbished premises meet relevant health and safety requirements.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 Governors and the leadership team have ensured that the school complies with current fire safety regulations, for example, installing and upgrading fire alarm systems as part of the ongoing works programme. Appropriate fire risk assessments are in place for all buildings, including those recently renovated, drawn up by a suitably qualified person. Staff have received training to enable them to take suitable precautions and to manage fire evacuation procedures. Pupils have carried out planned and unplanned fire evacuation practices in their new locations, so that they know how to vacate the building should the fire alarm be raised. There are sufficient staff with additional training as competent people. Records confirm that fire detection, prevention and firefighting equipment are maintained appropriately, and all buildings have clearly signed and uncluttered exit routes.

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

- 2.23 The school meets the standard.
- 2.24 Governors and senior leaders ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy. The school takes a responsible attitude towards risks posed to pupils during school activities both on and off site. Risk assessments are carried out effectively for each building, including specialist areas such as science laboratories, for outside areas and in the EYFS. Leaders have noted the need to assess and manage risk in corridors and on stairs and as a result have initiated a one-way system around the

building used by older pupils. Mindful of the frequency with which pupils walk to their recreation and games field, a suitable risk assessment identifies and shows actions which reduce risk to their safety. Risk assessments have all been revised for the amalgamated school and include appropriate assessment of any risks arising from co-education. These are due to be reviewed at suitable intervals.

### **Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23 - 29]**

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 The newly refurbished premises provide suitable accommodation for school activities across the age range and meet the needs of co-education. The school has ensured that sufficient toilet and washing facilities have been installed for both male and female pupils by repurposing and re-equipping toilets in all buildings. This means that each building has sufficient, suitably sized toilets and washing facilities which are separate for older male and female pupils. Whilst pupils do not change for physical education in school, changing facilities in the sports pavilion are separate for male and female pupils.
- 2.27 The school provides appropriate accommodation in each building for the treatment and short-term care of pupils who are ill or injured. This is in a screened area of the office so that adult support is readily available. Provision includes a bed or couch and washing facility and is close to a toilet.
- 2.28 The school premises are maintained to a suitable standard so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. In preparation for the amalgamation, the premises underwent effective, major refurbishment to ensure facilities are appropriate for the education of male and female pupils, as well as reflecting the age of pupils located in each building. Suitable arrangements ensure that defects which require attention are prioritised and remedied by the maintenance team.
- 2.29 The school ensures that the acoustic conditions of each room are suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place there. For example, acoustic panels were recently installed in the hall and dining room to reduce noise which was found to be excessive during lunchtimes. Lighting, including external lighting, in all buildings is suitable.
- 2.30 There is suitable provision in each building to enable pupils to obtain drinking water, usually by refilling their water bottles. Drinking water sources are clearly labelled as such and are located away from washrooms. The toilets and washrooms have an adequate supply of water and hot water is at a suitable temperature.
- 2.31 Whilst outside space on the school site is limited and therefore used only by younger pupils at break times, older pupils have their breaks at one of the school's two playing fields a short walk away. Both school sports sites, the second one of which is a short drive away, provide suitable spaces for games and physical education.

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

- 2.32 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.

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

- 2.33 The school meets the standard.
- 2.34 The school has planned effectively for the proposed changes. In preparation for the move to co-education, the governors have ensured that senior leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge

appropriate to their role and that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted.



### **3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to admit female pupils throughout and to lower its age range to three years is granted.
- 3.2 Improvements already made to the school's pastoral structure allow effective support for all pupils as they become accustomed to co-education. The major refurbishment programme has ensured that suitable health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment procedures are in place for the school premises, including those previously occupied by the girls' school. The premises, accommodation and staffing are suitably resourced and maintained to meet the needs of a co-educational school, including for children in the EYFS setting.

## **4. Summary of evidence**

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors and designated safeguarding governor. She visited different areas of the school and talked with a group of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.