

# Dallington School

8 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BW

## Inspection dates

20–22 February 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's inspirational leadership underpins the school's successes. She, together with a committed staff team, has created a school which puts pupils at the heart of all that happens. Standards are exceptionally high.
- Pupils, parents and carers, and staff are overwhelmingly proud of Dallington. Partnerships are strong and pupils describe the school as 'a family'.
- Pupils make excellent progress across a range of subjects, reflecting consistently outstanding teaching. Most pupils achieve outcomes that are well above average.
- All staff are highly ambitious for the school and individual pupils. Pupils' strengths and talents are valued. The most able pupils are well supported to achieve highly. For example, the proportion of pupils that achieve scholarships is high in both academic and creative subjects.
- Governors are committed to their roles. They know the school extremely well and hold leaders to account for pupils' achievements. Leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Specialists, such as dancers and musicians, provide all pupils with excellent opportunities to thrive. Teachers promote pupils' creativity very effectively. The curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities to find things out for themselves and study subjects in depth.
- Pupils show high levels of respect to others. Their behaviour is exemplary. The school's ethos strongly promotes pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils are confident and highly motivated to learn.
- Children in early years make rapid progress from their different starting points. Teachers are highly skilled at identifying children's individual next steps in their learning.
- From a young age, pupils are taught to value themselves and others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well promoted. However, in key stage 2, opportunities for pupils to develop a deeper understanding of different faiths could be strengthened further.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen opportunities for pupils, particularly in key stage 2, to deepen their understanding of different faiths.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, is highly respected by staff, pupils and parents. Together with governors and leaders, she has raised the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Throughout the school, standards are high and pupils make excellent gains in their learning.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and use well-informed action plans to continually improve the school. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning very effectively. Opportunities for staff professional development are very strong.
- The school's ethos puts pupils at heart of all that happens. All staff make sure that pupils' individual skills and talents are nurtured and that teaching and the curriculum are personalised to meet pupils' needs. Leaders promote pupils' independence, resilience and determination to be successful extremely well. Consequently, pupils are happy, highly motivated and demonstrate high levels of confidence.
- The curriculum is impressive. Leaders provide pupils with specialist teaching in music, dance, art and sports. These professional dancers, singers and musicians are exceptionally talented and inspire pupils to achieve highly in the creative arts. Pupils' singing, music and artistic skills are of an excellent standard. The science curriculum is engaging and interactive. It provides pupils with opportunities to investigate and solve problems. Visitors, such as scientists from specialist colleges, are used to enhance pupils' learning and raise the profile of the subject.
- Subjects such as history and geography are taught through topics. In these sessions, pupils create projects, undertake research and make decisions about what they want to find out. Reading, writing and mathematical skills are embedded throughout the curriculum and leaders make sure that tasks are meaningful. In this way, pupils are eager to learn and study subjects in depth. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 5 were completing impressive projects on Ancient Egypt, while pupils in Year 4 were linking their independent research on Scotland to their work in English on 'Macbeth'.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have at least one session each day that promotes their physical development and well-being. Lessons such as those in dance, swimming and drama are common features for all pupils.
- Teachers use the school's location in central London to enhance all aspects of the curriculum. Visits to galleries and museums, as well as local historical sights, are well planned to support pupils' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Additional activities, such as yoga, football, weaving and fencing, are popular with the pupils and contribute strongly to their personal development.
- Subject leaders share the headteacher's enthusiasm for learning. They are highly motivated and continually discuss the curriculum and pupils' learning as a team.
- Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work. One parent, whose views were echoed by many others, said, 'I really couldn't recommend Dallington School highly enough as it treats each child as an individual'.

- Leaders recognise that opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to develop a deep understanding of different faiths are not always as strong as other aspects of the curriculum.

## **Governance**

- Governors and leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills to the school. They know the school well, understand its ethos and share leaders' high expectations for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. Some governors are parents of pupils past and present and choose to continue to support the school's work because they have been impressed with how well their children have achieved. They are highly committed to the school and to maintaining high standards across all subjects, as well as making sure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Governors make sure that the school promotes equality in all aspects of its work. For example, governors know that leaders make sure that pupils develop a good understanding of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. Governors refer to equality as 'the core of their work' and ensure that the curriculum promotes tolerance and respect and celebrates diversity.
- Governors visit the school regularly. They meet with staff and hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. They look at pupils' progress information regularly. Governors attend training, such as on safeguarding, to ensure that they keep up to date with current legislation.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding leads ensure that pupils' safety and well-being are given the highest priority.
- The ethos and the excellent relationships that exist in the school ensure that all staff are aware of pupils' needs and quick to support any issues they may have. Staff know pupils very well and meet each day with parents to discuss pupils' well-being. They are fully trained in how to report any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare. Training is updated regularly so that staff are alert to the current child protection legislation.
- The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is well planned to teach pupils about safety. Pupils who spoke with inspectors had a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly when in public or when using the internet or social media. The school makes use of visitors to the school, such as sessions led by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), to support pupils' understanding of safety.
- The governor responsible for safeguarding makes sure that arrangements are effective. Leaders' checks on staff suitability are robust and the single central record of these checks meets requirements. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. It meets requirements and incorporates the latest child protection legislation.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Teachers and teaching assistants use their knowledge of pupils' interests to create exciting and meaningful learning experiences. Pupils respond extremely well to teachers' high expectations and helpful, personalised guidance.
- Leaders and teachers continuously discuss pupils' learning and progress. Teachers observe each other's work and routinely spend time in classrooms in order to share ideas, discuss strategies and learn from one another.
- Central to the excellent teaching and learning is the focus on pupils learning 'in context and for a reason'. Pupils describe this as 'learning without knowing it'. For example, pupils chose to write letters to their classmate who was unwell and teachers skilfully used this opportunity to extend pupils' punctuation and grammar skills. Teachers know what each pupil needs to learn next and make sure that this is built into the activities planned.
- The opportunities for pupils to find things out and explore are very effective. In science, for example, Year 3 pupils used wires, bulbs, buzzers and batteries to test out their own ideas for making circuits. In groups, pupils shared their 'discoveries' and set themselves challenges to make the buzzers louder and the bulbs brighter. Teachers always put learning into context. For example, on the day before the inspection, the school's power supply failed and therefore the session on electrical circuits held relevance and meaning for the pupils.
- Mathematics lessons are very well planned in each year group. Teachers are aware of the end-of-year expectations, but in many cases pupils are working beyond these. Teachers make excellent use of additional materials, challenges and problems to help pupils to master mathematical concepts. Teachers provide pupils with strong support and consistent opportunities to deepen their knowledge of mathematics.
- Teachers make sure that pupils acquire the skills needed to write accurately, neatly and for a range of purposes. Pupils enjoy writing and articulate their excellent ideas well. For example, Year 2 pupils had great fun writing about the unique features of the islands they had created. Teachers encourage pupils to be creative and inquisitive, while making sure that they use and apply spelling, punctuation and grammar skills accurately.
- Pupils are avid readers. They visit the local Barbican Library regularly and choose books to enjoy and to learn something from. Teachers use high-quality texts in lessons to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects. Pupils read fluently and with enthusiasm. They articulate their ideas well and understand what they read. The teaching of phonics, alongside other strategies, enables pupils to read unfamiliar words easily.
- The creative and performing arts are a strength of the school. Specialist teachers use their talents exceptionally well in lessons to develop pupils' skills in these subjects.
- Pupils who have additional needs including special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely with other professionals, such as therapists, to understand these pupils' needs. Additional interventions are used well and have a demonstrable impact on pupils' outcomes.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff show total commitment to pupils' well-being, nurturing their strengths and helping them to be successful.
- Pupils' personal development is exceptionally well supported by the school's curriculum and the wide range of enrichment activities. Teachers provide for pupils' physical well-being through a range of sports clubs and use of the nearby swimming pool and playground, as well as in dance and drama lessons. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and the effect this has on their bodies.
- From a young age, pupils are taught to value themselves and others. They are considerate and kind. Inspectors saw many examples of pupils choosing to help others with their learning or in the playground.
- Pupils are clear that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated at Dallington. Those who spoke with inspectors demonstrated an excellent understanding of diversity and the importance of equality. Pupils understand that each family is unique and articulate well the importance of the phrase, 'different families, same love'.
- Teachers provide pupils with the chance to discuss and debate world news. Pupils are encouraged to share their views and opinions. During the inspection, pupils spoke sensitively about the recent shootings in the United States, for example, and volunteered their views on the dangers associated with carrying knives.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school. They take part in lessons positively and listen attentively to the ideas of others. Pupils know that their views are important to teachers and leaders. They display high levels of self-confidence.
- Classrooms are a hive of activity in which pupils collaborate exceptionally well. Disruption to lessons is extremely rare and pupils told inspectors that behaviour in school is always good. Pupils' excellent behaviour is underpinned by a shared sense of belonging, based on respect and understanding for others. Many pupils describe Dallington as a 'family'.
- Lunchtime behaviour is also very good. Pupils walk to and from the local playground sensibly and are well supervised by adults. Pupils confidently create games for themselves and encourage others to join in and have fun.
- Pupils attend well and those who spoke with inspectors said how much they value their education and never want to miss a day. Even so, leaders are determined to continually improve pupils' attendance. Punctuality has improved and plans are in place to maintain this.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- By the time they leave Dallington, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils leave the school with the confidence and self-assurance needed to be successful at whatever they choose to do.
- Throughout the school and across a wide range of subjects, pupils make strong and sustained progress in their learning. Most pupils achieve standards that are above average, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books demonstrate high levels of attainment in each year group.
- Pupils of different abilities, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are supported well to make excellent progress in their learning. The highly effective and personalised guidance ensures that all pupils, including the most able pupils, achieve highly.
- The school is successful at helping pupils obtain places at a range of selective independent secondary schools. Over the past few years, the proportion of pupils obtaining scholarships has been high. These scholarships represent both academic subjects and the creative arts and this reflects the strong impact of Dallington's broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils develop superb skills in art and design. Work on display and in pupils' portfolios demonstrates how well pupils use a range of techniques and materials to create works of art. For example, observational paintings of plants showed excellent use of line and texture. All pupils learn to weave and knit.
- Pupils speak positively about the 'circus skills' curriculum. Leaders provide pupils with fun and exciting opportunities to balance, juggle and spin. These activities, alongside the other enrichment activities, help pupils develop strong concentration skills and the ability to learn from their mistakes and mishaps.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Children in early years are supported extremely well by kind and caring staff who share an excellent understanding of how young children learn and develop.
- From their starting points, children make rapid progress in their learning. The proportion of children currently making accelerated rates of progress is high. Teachers and support staff are particularly skilled at supporting children with lower starting points to develop their skills across all areas of learning.
- Teaching is consistently outstanding. Adults maximise opportunities to extend children's learning and skills. They skilfully intervene and challenge children's thinking.
- Classrooms are bright and engaging. Teachers use toys and resources thoughtfully to inspire children to learn. Children show high levels of confidence and independence for their ages and routinely make choices about what they want to play with. Adults interact with children positively, using all opportunities to extend children's language and communication skills.

- The early years leader, together with other leaders, evaluates this part of the school exceptionally well. Well-thought-out plans are in place to develop early years still further. Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards in relation to the early years foundation stage are met.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They play and learn happily together, take turns and look after their friends. Routines are very well established, adults are positive role models and there is a strong and purposeful atmosphere for learning.
- Parents are delighted with their children's start in early years. The online resource that allows parents to find out about and contribute to their children's progress is just one way that the school works with parents. Teachers routinely ask parents about children's interests and provide ideas about what they can do to extend children's learning further at home.

## School details

Unique reference number	100462
DfE registration number	206/6299
Inspection number	10041394

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mogg Hercules MBE
Chair	Professor Vaughan Grylls
Headteacher	Mogg Hercules MBE
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,978 to £12,630
Telephone number	0207 251 2284
Website	<a href="http://www.dallingtonschool.co.uk">www.dallingtonschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:hercules@dallingtonschool.co.uk">hercules@dallingtonschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–12 March 2015

## Information about this school

- Dallington School was last inspected in March 2015, when it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice. On the first day of the inspection, the school was closed to pupils due to a heating failure.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classrooms and in a range of subjects. They looked at the work on display, in pupils' books and in portfolios. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and progress.
- Inspectors went to the playground at lunchtime to observe pupils' behaviour and to check arrangements for keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, bursar and other senior leaders throughout the inspection. Meetings also took place with subject leaders and other staff.
- An inspector met with two of the governors and looked at documentation related to the work of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's assessment information, policies and procedures related to safeguarding, and the single central record of staff suitability checks.
- Inspectors met with some parents at the start of the inspection to hear their views on the school's work. During the inspection, Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, was not available due to technical problems that were outside the school's control. Interim arrangements were made so that parents could submit their views, anonymously, to the inspection support administrator. The lead inspector considered the views of 24 parents in this way.
- Inspectors toured the school site and reviewed documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David Radomsky

Ofsted Inspector

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