

Dallington School

8 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 0BW

Inspection dates 10–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- The school meets its aims by providing a happy, secure and stimulating environment for the pupils. Pupils achieve well in their academic studies and make outstanding progress in their personal development.
- Good teaching ensures that all groups of pupils, including the most able and those who find learning difficult, make good progress. Systems for marking pupils' work and monitoring their progress are effective.
- Provision in both the lower and upper Nursery is good and the children are given a strong start in learning to speak, read and write.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good; pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and are always interested to learn new things.
- The school provides a rich and stimulating variety of activities. These capture pupils' interests and enable pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- The school's leaders, including the proprietor, governing body, senior and middle leaders, have ensured that the independent school standards have been met and that good quality teaching secures good achievement and progress.
- The new management structure has already brought about significant improvements to the school in terms of resources, refurbishments and monitoring systems. This has had a positive impact on learning.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are robust. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The well-focused improvement plans already in place, have not yet had time to have full effect. However there are already positive signs in terms of improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are still new and are yet to be fully shared with the governing body.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent school Standards) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 20 lessons or part lessons. Most lessons were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team. Discussions with senior and middle leaders took place and staff responses to a questionnaire were analysed.
- The school's documentation was examined, including planning for subjects, records of pupils' progress and the welfare and safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspectors checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The views of parents were gained through their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspectors also met with parents and carers.

Inspection team

Sandra Teacher, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Mann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dallington School, situated in the Clerkenwell district of the London Borough of Islington, was founded in 1978 by the current headteacher, who is also the proprietor.
- The school has a non-selective intake of boys and girls between three and 11 years of age. There are currently 126 pupils on roll, of which 52 are full time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 34 are in receipt of nursery funding.
- Half of the pupils are of White British background; the other half has a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, but is mainly White European. A third of the pupils speak languages other than English at home.
- There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is divided into two units: lower and upper Nursery. There are two classes in Key Stage 1, grouped by age. There are two mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2, one for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the other for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The school was last inspected in November 2011, when the school was judged to provide a good quality of education.
- The school motto is 'Value your own worth and understand the difference in others'. The school aims 'to provide a non-competitive environment; providing for each child a happy, secure and stimulating environment that promotes discovery and observation and values a love of learning'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the work of the governing body and management of the school at all levels by:
 - implementing the new systems to evaluate and monitor all the policies and procedures, especially with regard to attendance.
- Raise the quality of learning and teaching from good to outstanding by focusing on ways to accelerate pupils' progress which are linked to the professional development of the staff.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good.

- The effectiveness of leadership and management can be seen in the above-average standards attained by pupils, arising from their good progress through the school.
- The staff and parents who responded to questionnaires say that the school is very well led. All parents who responded said that they would recommend this school to other parents.
- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, communicates high expectations and ambition to all staff so that they are focused on maintaining high academic standards, coupled with outstanding personal development.
- The school knows its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and senior leaders accurately evaluate the quality of teaching. A new system is used to record this information and is linked to arrangements for the professional development of staff.
- The new online tracking assessment system provides a clear picture of pupils' progress. It could be used more effectively to check the progress of the pupils who have English as an additional language and to analyse patterns of attendance.
- The teachers in charge of both the early years and the special needs provision have begun their new roles with enthusiasm. They have ensured that the systems in use are supporting pupils to make the best progress they can, with good interventions already having an impact.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils extremely well. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic learners, and the stimulating environment allows pupils to openly relate well to others, expect to be listened to and to be respected for their own point of view.
- Relationships are excellent, all are included and there is equality of opportunity for all with no discrimination. As one pupil writes, 'The relationships that Dallington helps us to make take our friendships to another level and create an astounding teamwork. It opens up bonds with everyone.'
- Leaders and managers ensure that pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Situated in the heart of the City of London, there are ample opportunities to visit both British institutions but also learn about the different cultures of their friends at the school.
- The school enriches its wide curriculum with extra-curricular activities that capture pupils' interest and help pupils achieve well. These include music, dance (including tap), swimming and residential trips.
- The school works hard, within the constraints of the accommodation, to provide a vibrant, stimulating environment, rich with creative displays. Daily trips to the off-site playground, plus the weekly visit to the local leisure centre, give pupils the opportunity for enjoying outdoor play and games.
- Some school policies have not been reviewed regularly as required and some records have not been kept up to date. These matters were quickly resolved by the bursar and administrative staff and inspectors were satisfied that pupils' safety had not been compromised.
- There is adequate accommodation for the care of sick or injured pupils that has access to a washbasin and is near to a toilet facility. It includes a place where a pupil can lie down quietly and privately. Although it is not totally dedicated as a medical room, it can be made specifically available for that purpose as soon as it is needed. The school ensures that a sick child can be checked on regularly in case of emergency.
- The school meets the requirements related to the provision of information for parents and carers, and the complaints procedure includes all of the required details.

■ The governance of the school:

The governing body meets regularly with the school leaders. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are busy putting into place a new management structure that includes succession planning and formal systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Governors are committed to continuing improvement in learning and teaching. Only good teaching is rewarded with promotion on the salary scale. A new system of appraisal has recently been put into place to include all staff, including the teaching and lunch-time assistants.

Financial resources are managed effectively and ensure that the school provides good value for money.

Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and parents, staff and pupils all think that the school is a safe and happy place to be. The school has robust arrangements for the recruitment of new staff to ensure that they are safe to work with children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All the required regulations are met. Pupils are proud of their school; they respect teachers, other adults and school property. They are welcoming and courteous when people visit the school. Staff have succeeded in creating a calm, purposeful atmosphere where pupils enjoy lessons, take responsibility for their own learning, and are very keen to make progress. The impact of this is that achievement is consistently good, and improving.
- Pupils, parents and staff describe the school as one happy family and their 'second home'. All pupils, including those who are new to the school, feel part of the community.
- Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility. For example, the school council oversees fundraising activities, working with local charities, organisations and businesses. These and other similar activities help pupils to understand their responsibilities to each other and the wider community as well.
- Pupils try hard, as shown by their eagerness to take part in discussions and debates about the things that they are learning or that are important to them.
- Pupils of all ages learn and play nicely together, especially at break times when they walk to the off-site playground and show good road safety awareness.

Safety

- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is good. Great emphasis is placed on pupils taking responsibility for their own actions so that they know how to keep themselves safe and where to turn to if they have any problems.
- Pupils learn about the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber bullying; the new e-safety policy makes sure they consider the dangers associated with the internet. All pupils are sure that bullying does not happen in the school.
- Pupils show great respect for all, regardless of ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. The impact of this is that pupils are friendly and inquisitive about people who are different from themselves.
- Attendance is below average and too many pupils take time off from school. The school is developing ways to try and improve this negative situation with positive signs of improvement.

The quality of teaching is good.

- Teachers and their assistants demonstrate that they have high expectations of all pupils.
- Teaching is good in most areas of learning. Teachers help pupils to take initiatives so that, for example, in science and mathematics, pupils carried out their own investigations independently, using equipment with confidence. In these lessons pupils showed that they had understood the investigative process and learned how to estimate weight and factors which affect plant growth.
- A strength of the school is the teaching of basic skills in English. Opportunities are provided across the curriculum for pupils to develop their reading skills and to write fiction and non-fiction. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 wrote stories about *The Three Little Pigs* which showed they had understood the plot very well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 composed poems stimulated by study of *Macbeth* or *The Jabberwocky*. Drama and performance help pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Basic skills in mathematics are also taught solidly. For example, Year 4 pupils carried out a survey of pupils' favourite chocolate and drew bar graphs to show their understanding of data handling. Year 3 pupils competently handled challenging sums with a good understanding of place value.
- The most able are rigorously challenged to attain high standards. A specialist teacher works regularly with a group of pupils in Year 6, so developing their confidence in sitting for the demanding entrance requirements of the secondary schools. A parent spoke highly of this support as he felt it had benefited his daughter as she had been accepted by the school of her choice.
- Teachers and their assistants work closely and effectively together. Teaching assistants play a major supporting role in ensuring that different groups of pupils make the same good progress as others. Help is always at hand, particularly from the headteacher who involves herself in the learning of every pupil to make sure they are getting the support they require if necessary.

The achievement of pupils is good.

- The majority of pupils start in the Nursery with standards of attainment in English and mathematics slightly above that expected for their age. By the time they leave the school, at the end of Year 6, they all have made good progress, and the most able have surpassed expectations by gaining entry to selective secondary schools. In the current Year 6, out of 11 pupils, three have gained scholarships.
- Progress across year groups in English and mathematics is good because basic skills are taught comprehensively. Pupils who have additional learning needs are carefully monitored so that specific interventions can be put into place to ensure they are making good progress.
- Those who have English as an additional language quickly gain fluent English speaking skills; their skills in writing have developed more slowly, and this is a target identified by the school.
- Pupils read widely every day and they always have a book to hand. This helps pupils to attain high standards in reading. School records and discussions with pupils indicate that they quickly develop a love of reading. Pupils are also provided with a range of opportunities through homework and research projects to develop their speaking, listening and writing skills in different subjects as well as English.
- Work seen in art and music (both singing and performance, with instruments such as the saxophone) and tap dancing) is of a high standard and the pupils speak with passion about their enjoyment of the creative arts.
- Pupils' ability to understand and articulate fundamental British values is strong, as is the democratic process in the school. The elected school council has significant influence. The school motto, 'understand the difference in others' is firmly embedded in the daily life of the school.

The early years provision is good.

- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, with positive improvements since the last inspection.
- Children start in the lower Nursery with skills that are at least typical for their age. By the time they leave the upper Nursery, all groups of children, including those from different ethnic heritages, the most able and those for whom the school receives additional nursery funding, have made good progress in achieving the early learning goals and some have exceeded expectations. Children are well prepared to move into Key Stage 1.
- Children in both settings develop a love of learning; they are always engaged in a wide range of stimulating activities and consistently display good behaviour.
- All practitioners are well trained and experienced and ensure that the children are always safe, happy and well cared for. Children respond by walking sensibly up and down steep flights of stairs to their classroom and learning road safety rules on their daily walks to the local park, for example.
- This park is their outdoor play area and practitioners ensure that learning and development, particularly as regards their physical skills, are constantly reinforced. All of the children enjoy music and movement, displaying good levels of control, both in listening and carrying out instructions but also in their performances with a range of musical instruments. Language and literacy are also developed through music, for example in their understanding of 'fast and slow' or 'loudly and softly'.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan and organise activities that help children make rapid and sustained progress in their learning. For example, during a literacy session, children made their own mothers' day cards, writing their own names and messages for their parent. Other children were typing their messages on the computer, or making and decorating play dough biscuits.
- Personal, social and emotional development is very strong. Children develop good attitudes to learning and play well together, for example when dressing up, shopping or cooking in the role play areas.

What inspection judgements mean

School provision:

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	100462
Inspection number	454240
DfE registration number	206/6299

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	Primary
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Proprietor	Mogg Hercules
Chair	Professor Vaughan Grylls
Headteacher	Mogg Hercules
Date of previous school inspection	November 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9978-12,630
Telephone number	0207 251 2284
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