

# Inspection of Dallington School

8 Dallington Street, London, Greater London, United Kingdom EC1V 0BW

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Inspection dates: 1 to 3 December 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school is a warm, welcoming and happy place for pupils. There is a strong sense of community. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the rich, creative learning experiences on offer. Right from the start, in the early years and across the school, pupils listen well during lessons and contribute to discussions.

All staff have high expectations of the pupils in their care. They plan an ambitious, broad curriculum, which aims to support the school's motto: 'Value your own worth and understand the differences in others'. Pupils are respectful towards others. They are taught that everyone is different. However, opportunities for pupils to develop a deeper understanding of different cultures and faiths nationally and locally are not as rich as the school's academic and creative offer.

Pupils are safe in the school. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns and trust staff to always help them. Behaviour is good most of the time. Although rare, when bullying does happen, pupils said that staff step in to sort it out.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The headteacher and staff, supported by the proprietor and governing body, have high expectations for all. Leaders have reviewed the school's curriculum and the headteacher has brought more structure to its design. Curriculum leaders identify what pupils need to know to be successful in the future. Pupils have opportunities to build their knowledge and understanding of key concepts over time. Teachers assess each pupil's progress closely.

Leaders have made improvements in many subjects. Programmes of work are typically well planned and sequenced so that they are ambitious. However, in a few subjects, plans do not show how teaching intends to build on what children learn in the early years. Some subjects are under review and curriculum thinking lacks detail about what pupils need to know and remember in the long-term. Consequently, teachers are not clear how the content and sequencing of the religious education (RE) curriculum enables pupils to deepen their understanding of different cultural traditions of people of different faiths and ethnicities.

All pupils access the wide range of creative music and arts projects, outdoor play, and sporting activities. Links with many subject specialists enhance the already rich cultural offer. Pupils enjoy coming to school and display good behaviour because they like their learning.

Pupils achieve well in reading. Leaders make sure the teaching of reading is prioritised by all staff, from Nursery to Year 6. Phonics teaching is consistent and daily. It starts right from the early years, where the youngest children enjoy singing and joining in with rhymes to learn the sounds letters represent. Teachers link sounds with letters well. Adults quickly spot pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

They know that being able to read gives pupils access to all subjects. They give extra reading support when needed so pupils keep up. Books are carefully chosen so young children practise reading using the phonics they know. Adults make sure reading is cherished. As pupils move through the school, teachers carefully select books for whole-class reading sessions. These book choices support pupils to think deeply, act wisely and understand the world in which they live. Standards of reading are high across the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) progress as well as other pupils across the curriculum. Staff are well supported in how to select the right resources, or to make adaptations so that the curriculum is accessible to all, including pupils with SEND.

In the early years, children are encouraged to become confident and successful learners. However, in a few cases, leaders have not considered how some areas of the early years curriculum are sequenced to prepare children for learning in Year 1 and beyond. The school meets the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The proprietor of the school has not kept up to date with the requirements of the independent school standards. For example, the school was not meeting its obligations in relation to relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). Leaders did not know that a separate written RSHE policy was a recently introduced requirement. They had not consulted with parents about the school's RSHE curriculum or published a policy for RSHE. An RSHE policy was drafted during the inspection, but parents had yet to be consulted about it.

Leaders have made sure that some aspects of the school's RSHE curriculum are taught through the new personal, social health and economic (PSHE) curriculum, which teachers have had some initial training on. However, not all aspects of the school's planned curriculum are taught. Teachers choose the elements of the RSHE curriculum that they are comfortable teaching. Additionally, leaders' expectation that teachers deliver an hour of PSHE teaching each week is not met in every year group. Leaders have not identified this as a concern.

Although the proprietor and governors have provided the school's leaders with some useful support, they have not ensured that effective systems are in place to enable them to challenge or support leaders fully. Consequently, they do not have enough knowledge and understanding about the curriculum that the school provides or how this has an impact on pupils' achievements. Leaders have no mechanisms in place to assure themselves that the school meets the latest statutory requirements or complies with the independent school standards. Not all the independent school standards are met.

Staff have mixed views about the support they receive from leaders. Most staff agree that the workload is manageable. However, many would value more coherently planned, subject-specific professional development.

Leaders' compliance with health and safety policies and procedures is strong. They know about their responsibilities for site safety. Leaders have an accessibility plan and comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Despite leaders' inattention to the latest statutory guidance, pupils at the school are happy and safe. All staff know that they have a responsibility to keep pupils safe. They understand how to raise concerns, are vigilant and take good care of the pupils at the school. Leaders have recently reviewed and published a safeguarding policy on the school's website.

The school has maintained a single central record of checks on staff. However, leaders have not kept up to date with changes to recruitment and vetting checks. They have not ensured that suitable systems are in place to monitor compliance with, and review of, the school's recruitment and vetting checks policy. Consequently, they were not aware that some checks had not been done or what further statutory checks were required, or for whom. The proprietor ensured that these outstanding checks were swiftly rectified during the inspection and suitable safeguards put in place.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The proprietor and governors have not ensured that effective systems are in place to enable them to challenge and support leaders fully. Consequently, they do not have enough knowledge and understanding about the curriculum that the school provides or how this has an impact on pupils' achievement. They have no mechanisms in place to assure themselves that the school is meeting the latest statutory requirements or that it complies with all the independent school standards. The proprietor and governors should ensure that there are effective systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's education and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school has consulted on or implemented the full PSHE/RHSE programme. Pupils are not being taught the school's complete RHSE programme. Parents have not been consulted on what their children are being taught in the new PSHE/RHSE curriculum, or informed of their right to withdraw their children from elements of it. Leaders should:
  - ensure that staff are confident to deliver all aspects of the PHSE/RHSE curriculum
  - put systems in place to assure themselves that the school's new PHSE/RHSE curriculum is delivered as planned so that all pupils access the school's full curriculum.

- Leaders have made improvements in many subjects, but these are not matched in all areas of the curriculum. In RE for example, teachers are not clear how the content and sequencing of the curriculum enables pupils to deepen their understanding of different cultural traditions of people of different faiths and ethnicities who live in modern Britain. In a few subjects, planning in key stage 1 does not consider what children learn in early years. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum thinking is sufficiently detailed in all subjects and builds on learning in the early years.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100462
<b>DfE registration number</b>	206/6299
<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10210750
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	None
<b>Proprietor</b>	Abigail Hercules
<b>Chair</b>	Vaughn Grylls
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maria Blake
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£11,490 to £14,490
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7251 2284
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dallingtonschool.co.uk">www.dallingtonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:hercules@dallingtonschool.co.uk">hercules@dallingtonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 to 22 February 2018

## Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection was in February 2018, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding, and all the independent school standards were met.
- Since the school's previous standard inspection, the school has a new proprietor, who has appointed a new headteacher.
- In addition to wrap-around holiday care, the proprietor runs a breakfast club and an after-school club for those on the school roll.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.
- The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher. Meetings were held with the proprietor and three governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- In considering the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and the school's register of admissions and leavers. Inspectors looked at records relating to the safeguarding of children. They held discussions with a range of pupils, staff and leaders. Inspectors also considered records of the training staff receive relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and checked arrangements for keeping pupils safe at lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and documents. Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

- Meetings were held with members of staff, including those responsible for behaviour and attendance at the school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day, to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to the online survey for parents, Parent View, and the additional free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of the online survey for staff. They considered the views of pupils through discussions and the online pupils' survey.

### **Inspection team**

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lascelles Haughton

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
  - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools,
  - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
  - 2A(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
  - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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