



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Durlston Court School

July 2023

School's details

School name	Durlston Court School			
DfE number	850/6056			
Address	Durlston Court School Becton Lane Barton-on-Sea New Milton Hampshire BH25 7AQ			
Telephone number	01425 610010			
Email address	secretary@durlstoncourt.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Richard May			
Chair of governors	Mr Chandra Ashfield			
Proprietor	Durlston Court School Trust			
Age Range	2 to 14			
Number of pupils on roll	260			
	Pre-prep	107	Middle School	81
	Seniors	72		
Date of visit	10 July 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Durlston Court School is an independent co-educational day school. The school has a pre-prep department which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting and consists of a kindergarten (Nursery), Reception, and Years 1 to 2. Pupils then move into the middle school for Years 3 to 5, and the senior school for Years 6 to 8. The school has 67 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), one of whom has an education, health and care plan. There are five pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was of regulatory compliance in November 2021.

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 increase the total pupil numbers from 296 to 456 and to increase the upper age limit from 14 to 16 through instituting a senior school. 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, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 2A (relationships and sex education)	Met
Part 1, paragraphs 3 (teaching) and 4 (framework for pupil performance)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)	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 6 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The school curriculum is suitably broad and covers all the required areas of learning. It provides for the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. It has been effectively planned to extend to pupils preparing for GCSE examinations. The school has carried out detailed curriculum overviews by subject and the planned schemes of work are likely to secure the required knowledge, skills and understanding for pupils aged 14 to 16. The curriculum aims are clearly outlined in a suitable curriculum policy and include preparation for pupils' future learning after the age of 16 and for employment. The school has prepared a suitable range of activities for those aged 14 to 16 with extra-curricular provision and enrichment included. An appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is planned for pupils aged 14 to 16 which includes an extension to the school's effective RSE curriculum. The school has a planned *Life Experiences at Durlston* (LEAD) programme which includes up to date careers advice and is designed to teach transferable life skills. The school has allowed for a sufficient amount of lesson time for each proposed subject and the curriculum is planned to be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness by the senior leadership team.

Quality of education provided – teaching and assessment [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 3 and 4]

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 The school has assessed the skills, knowledge and experience required to prepare pupils for GCSE and has made appropriate appointments. Staff show sufficient subject knowledge and teaching experience to ensure that pupils will make good progress. There will be a new head of the senior school appointed for September 2024. The proposed senior school means that current pupils will naturally graduate up to Year 11. Plans for the proposed new cohort include well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. Teaching in the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and planning shows that this is likely to be taken into account in the planning of lessons for the proposed new cohort.
- 2.5 A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. The senior leadership team have planned sufficiently to be able to assess individual pupils' progress at the ages of 14 to 16, as they currently do effectively in younger years. Details provided to parents of pupils' performance in each of their subjects is planned to be suitably regular, with a report card each term including attainment and attitude to learning grades. There will be an initial pastoral form tutor meeting in October and a parents' meeting in January. A full written report for each subject will be made in the summer term. Teachers will continue to identify from assessment procedures where pupils need extra support, especially for those pupils with SEND.

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

- 2.6 The school meets the standard.
- 2.7 The school actively promotes values which are fundamental to life in Britain through its curriculum, form time, assemblies and a variety of activities and events which take place throughout the year. It encourages pupils to have respect for other people regardless of their background or the protected

characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The school prepares pupils for the responsibilities of citizenship in the UK and it encourages respect for democracy and the democratic process. It provides opportunities for pupils to make meaningful contributions to the lives of others within the school and the local community. The school uses the LEAD programme and PSHE to predominantly deliver these aspects and plans to continue to do so within the senior school. This provision is likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in age range and pupil numbers.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.8 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 The school meets the standard.
- 2.11 Implementation of all aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for the needs of pupils, including in the EYFS. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in age range and pupil numbers.
- 2.12 Staff demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the safeguarding procedures including those for whistleblowing, children missing in education and the code of conduct for staff. Procedures are implemented effectively to safeguard all pupils including those at risk and those in need. The particular vulnerability of pupils with SEND is understood and these pupils receive appropriate support for their welfare and education. Staff show suitable understanding of their responsibilities and have a suitable knowledge of the thresholds for reporting potential issues, including child-on-child abuse. Staff are aware of who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure and that they can make a direct referral to children's services if necessary.
- 2.13 The safeguarding policy provides contact details for the required local agencies. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are outlined in the policy. The training for staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities is in line with local requirements and statutory advice. Training for all staff is of sufficient frequency and quality. Central records of training content and attendance are comprehensive.
- 2.14 Discussions with the safeguarding lead (DSL) confirmed that both pupils and staff receive guidance on how to address issues when they arise and receive appropriate support. Records of safeguarding confirm that the school acts appropriately in any situation that arises. The DSL acts straight away on any early signs of risk and monitors pupils together with appropriate staff in the school.
- 2.15 Staff, including senior leaders, listen to the views of the pupils effectively. Pupils spoken to confirmed this and said that the school responds to all issues quickly and takes action when needed. The school has a suitable relationship with outside agencies. Referrals to children's services and the local authority designated safeguarding officer (LADO) are detailed and timely. Behavioural and safeguarding records are comprehensive. Senior leaders understand potential links between bullying or poor behaviour and safeguarding, including sexualised behaviour. Thresholds for referring such incidents to external agencies are understood. Any incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are handled appropriately with due care taken to safeguard the welfare of the bully or victim. Pupils are supported

in learning how to keep themselves safe, including online, through monitoring and filtering technology which is effective.

- 2.16 Suitable arrangements for handling allegations against all staff are clearly included in the safeguarding policy. Records show that the school seeks immediate advice from children's services when any allegation is made. They show that procedures are followed effectively, and the school considers advice given appropriately. The school understands its role in reporting any person to the relevant regulatory bodies where necessary. Governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. They provide effective oversight and carry out an annual review of safeguarding appropriately.

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

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 There is a suitable health and safety policy which is implemented effectively by the school, ensuring that all relevant laws are complied with. Records show that testing of utilities is systematically undertaken. Training in health and safety is comprehensive throughout the school. Senior leaders monitor any trends and take steps to mitigate incidents. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in age range and pupil numbers

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standard.
- 2.20 The school has a suitable fire prevention strategy, fire risk assessment and action plan. Evidence of the completion of actions from a fire service inspection in February 2023 confirms that these measures are implemented effectively. The fire risk assessment includes all buildings and has been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Fire procedures are understood by staff and pupils, who all have training provided. Regular fire drills are undertaken and recorded. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in age range and pupil numbers.

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

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 Pupils at all ages of the school are properly supervised by suitably qualified and trained staff. The school has planned effectively to recruit additional staff to meet its growing needs. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in age range and pupil numbers.

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

- 2.23 The school meets the standard.
- 2.24 The school has effective risk assessments for buildings and educational visits as well as aspects such as sport and activities. All appropriate risk assessments are clear and include approaches to be taken to identify and mitigate risks. There are specific and effective plans which assess risks for vulnerable pupils, which are managed through the DSL. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in age range and pupil numbers.

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

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.

- 2.26 All the required checks on staff, contractors and the governors are carried out and completed before they take up their positions. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in age range and pupil numbers.
- 2.27 The school maintains a comprehensive and accurate single central register of appointments which includes the dates on which all checks have been completed.

Premises and accommodation – toilets and changing accommodation; medical facilities; maintenance; acoustics; lighting; water supply and outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–29]

- 2.28 The school meets the standards.
- 2.29 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to the standard required by the health and safety executive; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; and water provision is adequate. There is suitable outdoor space for physical education and outdoor play. The school has a master plan of how senior pupils will be effectively accommodated gradually over the next 3 years. This will be completed by 2025 with a new senior school block within the school site. The master plan provides clarity for each stage of the school's development. The school has suitable teaching, study resource and social areas for the first cohort of senior pupils. There is a proposed senior school building which will provide most of the teaching, study and social areas for pupils once the school incorporates Years 9, 10 and 11. Senior pupils will benefit from some separate facilities to those for younger pupils, whilst being an integral part of the whole school community. The plan is sufficient to meet the needs of the envisaged increase in age range and pupil numbers. Evidence shows that it is likely to ensure the standards continue to be met.

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

- 2.30 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]

- 2.31 The school meets the standard.
- 2.32 Suitable practices and procedures are implemented which allow senior leaders and governors to manage safeguarding and welfare arrangements and monitor compliance with the standards. The leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met. The strategic and operational planning for the proposed increase in age range and number of pupils actively promotes the wellbeing of all pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its numbers to 456 and its upper age range to 16 be approved as planning for the proposed increase across all areas of the school is suitable.

4. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Miss Sue Duff

Reporting inspector