



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

DLD College London

March 2023

School's details

College	DLD College London			
DfE number	208/6004			
Address	DLD College London 199 Westminster Bridge Road Lambeth London SE1 7FX			
Telephone number	02079 358411			
Email address	dld@dld.org			
Principal	Mr Irfan Latif			
Chair of proprietors	Sir John Ritblat			
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group Ltd			
Age range	14 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	369			
	Day pupils	152	Boarders	217
	Upper School	59	Sixth Form	310
Date of inspection	28 March 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 DLD College London is an independent day and boarding school. It is co-educational and predominantly educates sixth-form pupils but admits some aged 14 and 15 years. The school was founded in 1931 and today it offers a wide range of courses which include GCSE, A level, BTEC and International Foundation Programmes (IFPs). The school moved to new purpose-built accommodation on London's south bank in 2015. The school comprises two sections: upper school for pupils aged 14 to 16 years and a sixth form for those aged 16 to 18 years. The self-contained boarding accommodation is situated on the upper floors with the teaching and other areas below. The school is owned and governed by the Alpha Plus Group.
- 1.2 The school has 62 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 227 pupils. The school's previous inspection was an educational quality inspection in October 2019.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.3 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to lower the age range to include pupils aged 13 and extend the upper age limit for pupils to 21. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 2A (relationship and sex education)	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 10	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 20	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises of and accommodation at schools); NMS 4	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (Leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

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

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 The curriculum is suitably documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for teaching and covers the required breadth and depth of material. This includes the Year 9 curriculum intended for the proposed new intake of pupils in September 2023. Curriculum arrangements include effective provision to meet the individual needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. The curriculum for older pupils caters suitably for those wishing to combine GCSE examinations with BTEC courses. Pupils have access to a wide range of appropriate learning pathways. The sixth form provides a range of A-level subjects alongside the IFP which prepares international pupils for undergraduate study. The same sixth form curriculum offer will be made available for the proposed Year 14 cohort, consisting of pupils aged 19 to 21. This is suitably planned to enable international pupils who enter the British education system at a slightly older age to access appropriate qualifications. The curriculum provision across the 13 to 21 age range is suitably designed to lead on to courses of individual pupils' choice at university; to apprenticeship; or to enable entry into the world of work. The school has a suitable plan for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). This is suitable for both Year 9 pupils and the sixth form, including the new proposed Year 14, in a graduated programme. It includes guidance on dangerous substances, including smoking. The PSHE programme also encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics and effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. The scheme of work meets all of the requirements of statutory guidance for RSE. The policy for RSE is available to parents on the school's website. In drawing up the policy and scheme of work the school has consulted pupils, parents and staff and taken their views into consideration. The programme is designed effectively so that topics are revisited in subsequent years in order to build up deeper understanding. The RSE and PSHE programmes are taught as part of the regular timetable throughout the year. Pupils in Years 12 to 14 experience PSHE through focused themed modules featuring external speakers and online activities.
- 2.3 The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed age range extension to include pupils aged 13 and raise the upper age limit for pupils to 21.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.4 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.5 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

- 2.6 The school meets the standards.
- 2.7 Scrutiny of records, observation and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that appropriate safeguards are implemented effectively. Those responsible for safeguarding hold senior positions within the school. They are suitably knowledgeable and appropriately trained, including for multi-agency working. Safeguarding, pastoral, healthcare and boarding staff share key information regularly

and effectively. They take into account each individual pupil's physical and psychological needs and wishes. This information is used to agree appropriate action, including the drawing-up and implementation of individual support plans. There is effective liaison with external agencies, including referral to child and adolescent health services (CAMHS) and the local authority designated officer (LADO) for safeguarding. Training for other staff and for governors is conducted regularly as required. It is effective and includes informal updates. Staff are knowledgeable about changes in recent legislation, including the management of children's mental wellbeing, contextual safeguarding, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence. They understand the principles underpinning the staff code of conduct and the procedures for making a referral, including the importance of low-level reporting. They are confident about using whistleblowing procedures. The school understands the additional need to safeguard pupils with regard to the introduction of Year 14 above the normal sixth form age. Interviews with staff confirmed that training is thorough and safeguarding effectively managed. Senior leaders take appropriate action if any perceived breach of the staff code of conduct occurs. They understand their responsibility to make referrals to the relevant statutory bodies once investigations by external agencies are completed. They fulfil this effectively.

- 2.8 The governor responsible for safeguarding meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies and extended safeguarding team. This maintains effective oversight of safeguarding policies and their implementation in the school and the several floors of boarding in the one building. Reports are given regularly to the governing board by the safeguarding governor and the DSL. These highlight appropriate details of any safeguarding incidents which occur, including during trips and outside of school. This ensures that governors have an appropriate level of understanding, scrutiny and oversight. In addition to continuous monitoring, a suitable annual review of safeguarding is undertaken in line with guidance from the local authority (LA).
- 2.9 Pupils stated confidently that they receive a detailed induction when they start school including how to stay safe and who to talk to; how to contact helplines, including Childline and the Children's Commissioner; online safety; and behavioural expectations. They can name a number of staff to whom they can turn if they are worried or concerned including tutors, counsellors and house parents. Boarders also know how to contact the school's independent listeners. Any such concerns are monitored and acted upon by the DSL. Records confirm that when pupils raise a concern they receive a timely response and action is taken where needed.
- 2.10 The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of proposed age range extension to include pupils aged 13 and raise the upper age limit for pupils to 21.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 9]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 The school has an appropriate policy in place for health and safety which is reviewed and updated regularly and implemented consistently. Senior leaders and governors monitor all aspects of health and safety regularly. Those responsible for day-to-day operations provide detailed reports, including completion of required maintenance logs and records of work carried out by internal maintenance staff and contractors. The roles and responsibilities of staff and governors for health and safety are stated clearly and there is appropriate delegation of duties and training. Maintenance staff know the site well and are aware of potential risks and hazards. The school has a comprehensive management plan and appropriate measures are taken to ensure safe control and storage of hazardous substances (COSHH). Well-maintained electronic logs are used effectively by maintenance staff in order to prioritise work schedules and respond to emergencies without delay.

- 2.13 The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed age range extension to include pupils aged 13 and raise the upper age limit for pupils to 21.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 10]

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school has a suitable fire risk policy which is reviewed and updated annually. The school's fire risk assessment is undertaken by a suitably qualified person. It is reviewed regularly, and any recommendations are implemented without delay. Appropriate fire procedures are in place, including for the several upper floors of the building that are used for boarding. Competent persons have been appointed to assist in taking preventative and protective measures, including ensuring that all parts of the buildings are evacuated if there is a fire. Regular and suitable training is in place for staff and for those with responsibilities, including fire wardens. Each floor of this multistorey building has named qualified fire wardens.
- 2.16 Staff, pupils and visitors are provided with appropriate fire safety information, including how to evacuate and where the fire assembly points are located. Half-termly fire drills are conducted at different times of the day and night. These are recorded accurately, including the time it takes for evacuation, any concerns, and any improvements that need to be made. Suitable emergency exits, escape routes and signage are in place. Effective monitoring systems ensure that these are maintained consistently to the required standards. Fire equipment including extinguishers and alarms are checked regularly by external contractors. Records of all fire safety checks are maintained appropriately and monitored by governors.
- 2.17 The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed age range extension to include pupils aged 13 and raise the upper age limit for pupils to 21.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]

- 2.18 The school meets the standards.
- 2.19 The school has a suitable policy for supervising pupils which is implemented effectively. Staff receive guidance during induction and on-going revision is provided in the staff handbook and in regular updates. Staff have clear job descriptions detailing their duties with regard to supervision. Comprehensive duty rotas are in place covering all areas of the school and times of day taking into account the age, number and needs of pupils and the locations and activities involved. This includes supervision rotas for the newly designated Year 9 and 10 social area ready for the new September 2023 intake. Sixth form tutors will be deployed to supervise Year 14 pupils when not in lessons. Monitoring by senior staff ensures that supervision is effective, and that cover is put in place without delay if it is required.
- 2.20 The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed age range extension to include pupils aged 13 and raise the upper age limit for pupils to 21.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 There is a suitable policy and effective procedures with regard to risk assessment and these operate successfully. Risk assessments are recorded electronically and monitored effectively by the health and safety committee. There are clear lines of responsibility for assessing risk. Departmental heads,

including those responsible for boarding, oversee risk assessments in their departments effectively. Senior leaders monitor those for off-site trips. Individual care plans include the assessment of risk for vulnerable pupils. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly, and appropriate action taken where required to reduce risk. The school has completed an effective risk assessment and strategic plans covering the proposed introduction of younger Year 9 pupils, and older pupils aged 19 to 21 in the proposed Year 14 September 2023 intake. It has put suitable procedures in place as a result that include the development of social areas for younger pupils.

- 2.23 The policy for off-site visits is detailed and clear with a helpful flow chart identifying risk assessments that are required. Parents are suitably informed of arrangements for school trips, including behaviour expectations, safeguarding procedures, activities and travel details. Risk assessments are amended if changes occur. Any changes to arrangements are communicated to parents without delay.
- 2.24 Staff confirmed that they had received training regarding the completion of risk assessments. They are confident in completing them, including those for boarding, trips and hazardous activities.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 There is a suitable recruitment policy in place which covers the required recruitment checks and procedures and which is implemented effectively. All staff, governors and persons engaged in regulated activity, including in boarding, are checked and recorded appropriately on the single central register of appointments (SCR). Those responsible for carrying out the required recruitment checks and the maintenance of staff records ensure that checks and evidence are in place prior to commencing work in the school. Appropriate procedures are made for managing contractors, including ensuring that they are accompanied at all times if not checked by the school. Visits to boarding areas are suitably regulated by both staff and CCTV.
- 2.27 The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the proposed age range extension to include pupils aged 13 and raise the upper age limit for pupils to 21.

Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–30; NMS 4]

- 2.28 The school meets the standards.
- 2.29 Suitable policies and procedures are in place which ensure that the school premises and accommodation and facilities are maintained to a standard where the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured as far as possible. There are sufficient designated toilet and changing facilities for male and female pupils throughout the school. These already accommodate the school's total capacity number of pupils of 750. This has not yet been met and is likely that it will be a few years before this happens. The facilities are appropriate for the proposed younger Year 9 pupils and for older pupils aged 19 to 21. Suitable disabled facilities are available for staff and visitors.
- 2.30 Suitable accommodation is provided for the medical examination and treatment of pupils and for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils. This applies to both boarding and day pupils who are cared for in the school's suitably equipped wellbeing centre. The accommodation includes toilets and bathroom facilities and is adequately staffed. The school site is suitably secure. All visitors are required to sign in at the reception area and are accompanied at all times. Use of surveillance equipment does not intrude upon boarders' privacy. Acoustics and water supply are appropriate throughout the school. Lighting indoors and outdoors is suitable for the activities which normally take place and it ensures that people can safely enter and leave the school premises. There is sufficient space for outdoor play. Accommodation for boarders is appropriate, including for boarders aged 19 to 21.

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

- 2.31 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]

- 2.32 The school meets the standards.
- 2.33 Senior leaders and governors, including those with specific responsibilities for safeguarding and boarding, demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Measures planned or implemented for the proposed younger Year 9 intake and for older pupils aged 19 to 21 are likely to ensure pupils' continued wellbeing.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the request to lower the age range to include Year 9 pupils and to extend the upper age for pupils to 21 is granted.

4. Summary of evidence

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

Inspectors

Mr Desmond Dunne

Reporting inspector