

# School inspection report

24 to 26 September 2024

## **Durlston School**

Becton Lane

Barton-on-Sea

New Milton

Hampshire

BH25 7AQ

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS.....	4
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	6
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>7</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	8
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	9
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	10
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors and leaders evaluate the impact of the school's provision methodically and take effective actions designed to improve pupils' outcomes. Leaders make sure that all Standards are met.
2. Leaders and governors do not always review policies as effectively as possible. At the start of the inspection, the safeguarding policy did not reflect current statutory guidance. This was rectified during the inspection.
3. Clear teaching develops pupils' skills and knowledge effectively. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that they make good progress.
4. Leaders and staff support pupils' physical and mental health effectively. Teaching promotes pupils' resilience, while the curriculum includes guidance about strategies that pupils can use to overcome moments of stress or setback.
5. The pastoral support that pupils receive contributes well to their development of self-confidence and self-esteem. The school promotes pupils' sense of responsibility towards others by encouraging involvement in initiatives like the school council and community service, while fostering social responsibility, environmental care, and cultural awareness through a supportive and well-rounded curriculum.
6. The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme meets statutory requirements and contains appropriate content overall. However, teaching about puberty, and safe and healthy sexual relationships does not meet the needs of some older pupils as substantially as possible.
7. Careers guidance, including through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons from external speakers is suitable and effective overall. However, the guidance provided about post-16 courses does not always prepare or inform all pupils about further education as effectively as possible.
8. The school demonstrates a comprehensive approach to safeguarding. Staff receive regular training and implement their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance, are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

- review school policies effectively to ensure that they always reflect current statutory guidance
- Strengthen the RSE programme's teaching about puberty and safe and healthy sexual relationships, to meet older pupils' needs more substantially
- Strengthen the careers programme's guidance about post-16 course choices to better inform and prepare all pupils for the next stage in their education.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders apply their knowledge and skills effectively to promote pupils' wellbeing. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure that the school meets the Standards. Leaders know the pupils well and ensure that the provision typically meets their individual needs. Pupils are supported within a caring environment.
10. Governors monitor the success of the school proactively and effectively. They conduct frequent visits, ensuring leaders are held accountable and responsibilities are met. This oversight directly contributes to effective school management. However, leaders and governors do not always review policies as effectively as possible.
11. Leaders evaluate the impact of the school's provision effectively. For example, regular observations and constructive feedback from school leaders at all levels enables staff to refine their teaching styles and strategies. This contributes to the good progress that pupils make. Leaders are also refining their procedures for tracking the progress of pupils from the beginning to the end of their time in school as a result of their own evaluations of the effectiveness of these procedures.
12. Leaders ensure that all required information is accessible to parents via a comprehensive website. Clear articulation of the school's aims and policies keeps parents informed and helps foster a community that supports pupil success. Leaders provide the local authority with appropriate information relating to any pupils whom they fund, including pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
13. Risk assessment procedures are systematic and effective. Staff receive appropriate training in the school's risk assessment arrangements, including those relating to trips and visits. Leaders review risk assessments regularly and update them as required. Risk assessments are detailed and comprehensive. They identify appropriate measures to mitigate the risks that have been identified.
14. Leaders implement an effective complaints procedure. They encourage parents to voice any concerns that they might have and respond to any complaints within the published timescale. Leaders keep a suitable record of any formal complaints that have been submitted and the actions taken in response to these.
15. The school fully complies with the Equality Act 2010 and has an appropriate accessibility plan in place, which they review regularly. Leaders ensure that pupils of all backgrounds are treated equally and not subject to any discrimination against them.
16. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to support pupils' wellbeing. For example, they liaise with external specialists to help meet the needs of particular pupils who have SEND. Leaders also work in conjunction with local safeguarding partners when appropriate.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

- 17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. The curriculum contains a suitable range of subjects. Schemes of work are well structured to develop subject knowledge methodically and enable pupils to make links between the different subjects that they are taught. Leaders monitor the curriculum to ensure that it meets different groups of pupils' needs. For example, leaders have recently reviewed the mathematics and science programmes for this purpose. In the early years, the curriculum is designed to build up key skills and knowledge, such as physical and language skills and personal, social and emotional understanding. The curriculum for the oldest year groups is designed to provide the pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to be able to succeed in GCSE examinations.
19. Teaching is effective. Staff in the early years engage in dialogue with children that encourages them to express themselves articulately. Staff make effective use of resources, including the indoor and outdoor classrooms, to stimulate their curiosity and learning. Teachers across the school use effective teaching strategies to convey their knowledge about the various subjects and provide clarification when required. They utilise well-chosen resources, such as texts of high quality, effectively. Staff adapt their teaching, such as by varying the levels of challenge and providing clear guidelines, to cater for different pupils' needs and build on their prior attainment. As a result, pupils make good progress, and a high proportion of leavers attain places at their chosen next schools.
20. An effective assessment framework is in place throughout the school. This begins in the early years where staff utilise baseline assessments and termly evaluations across the seven areas of learning and development to determine children's learning needs and adapt provision to meet these. Leaders carefully monitor pupils' progression in literacy and numeracy and check older pupils' attainment against national expectations. Leaders use their evaluations of pupils' achievement to modify and adapt teaching and provide additional support when needed.
21. The leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND work with staff to identify pupils' needs at an early stage and share strategies designed to meet these needs effectively. Leaders create individual plans that identify clear and precise targets for the pupils to work towards. They assess pupils' progress against these targets to check how effective teaching and any additional support is in enabling these targets to be met. Leaders work effectively with external specialists, such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, to help ensure that pupils who have SEND have their learning and pastoral needs met.
22. Pupils have access to suitable extra-curricular provision. The range of clubs and activities supports pupils to develop their skills in areas such as music, pottery, yoga, drama, art, cooking and dance.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

**23. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

24. Leaders promote the importance of showing respect to others and develop pupils' understanding of why any prejudice or discrimination against people on the grounds of their race, sex, faith or other protected characteristics is unacceptable. The curriculum explores themes of equality and diversity. In particular, the PSHE programme, supported by assemblies and messages in chapel services, develops pupils' comprehension of the need for mutual respect and understanding of those with different backgrounds or lifestyles to their own.
25. The school supports pupils' development of self-confidence and self-knowledge effectively. Early years staff maintain a calm environment, and key people provide children with encouragement and support that develops their confidence to explore independently. Older pupils are provided with leadership opportunities and encouragement to see themselves as capable future leaders. Leaders also take effective steps to make pupils feel recognised and of value, such as through the presentation of badges rewarding individuals' achievements and effort.
26. The curriculum supports pupils' development of spiritual awareness. Pupils learn about a range of world religions, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Assemblies explore moral values and principles.
27. The physical education (PE) programme develops pupils' understanding of the importance of exercise. It enables pupils to enhance their skills in a variety of sports such as football, rugby, netball, hockey, athletics, cricket, swimming and gymnastics. Staff provide carefully tailored provision to ensure the accessibility of PE and meet the needs of pupils who have SEND, such as by making effective use of activities outside the main PE programme to practise core physical skills.
28. The consistent modelling of school values by staff supports a unified and effective approach to behaviour management that promotes good behaviour. Leaders and staff communicate high behavioural expectations clearly and apply rewards and sanctions consistently. Whenever pupils do make negative behavioural choices, leaders encourage them to reflect on the consequences of their actions.
29. Incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Leaders keep details records of behavioural incidents, and take effective action should they identify any trends.
30. The PSHE programme supports pupils' understanding of the importance of looking after their own physical and emotional wellbeing. It engages pupils with themes such as signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships, supporting one's own mental health and the importance of healthy eating.
31. The RSE programme meets statutory requirements and contains appropriate content overall. Staff teach in an age-appropriate manner about topics such as consent and misogyny. Lessons are delivered by an experienced team, who meet termly to review pupil end-of-topic assessments. However, the programme's guidance about puberty, and safe and healthy sexual relationships does meet the needs of some older pupils as fully as possible.
32. Effective deployment of staff ensures that pupils remain suitably supervised at all times. Appropriate staff-to-child ratios are maintained in the early years.

33. The premises and accommodation contain appropriate facilities, such as a suitably furnished medical room, and are suitably maintained. Health and safety checks and maintenance are carried out systematically. Fire safety arrangements are effective. Staff are suitably trained in fire safety procedures. Fire evacuation drills take place termly.
34. Appropriate procedures are in place for the administration of first aid and medication. The school has a suitably number of trained first aiders, including those trained in paediatric first aid. The school provides a dedicated area staffed by trained personnel, including mental health first aiders, to offer additional emotional support when required.
35. Admission and attendance arrangements comply with recent changes to statutory guidance. Leaders inform the local authority appropriately whenever pupils leave or join the school at non-standard times.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 36. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

37. British values such as mutual respect, democracy and upholding the law, are successfully embedded into the culture of the school through the curriculum and assembly programme. Leaders plan the curriculum so that a wide range of themes relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion are integrated across the range of subjects. The exploration of these themes and topics deepens pupils' appreciation for diversity. For example, pupils learn about the treatment of Jews by the Nazis, fake news, disability and access, gender stereotypes and racism and other forms of prejudice. Pupils explore the achievements and situations of women and different cultural groups in particular moments in history. Pupils learn about specific values, such as individual liberty, fair treatment and respect for people's faiths and beliefs.
38. Pupils learn about democracy, rules and laws and British institutions through their studies. For example, they explore the representation of different groups in society in the democratic process through themes such as 'Black history'. They study important figures such as Barack Obama and Rosa Parks and consider what issues their histories exemplify. Pupils consider themes such as extremism and what constitutes appropriate behaviour. Leaders and staff make certain that any discussions of political themes remain impartial and unbiased. Pupils are prepared well for life in British society.
39. Senior pupils receive effective careers guidance overall. Fortnightly 'life experience at Durlston (LEAD) lessons feature external speakers, ex-pupils, and industry leaders who inform the pupils about a range of different careers. The LEAD programme also provides pupils with appropriate economic education. However, the careers programme's guidance on post-16 course choices does not inform all pupils about or prepare them for the next stage in the education as effectively as possible.
40. The school develops pupils' social awareness, confidence and skills successfully. Encouraging staff and a calm environment support children's developing ability to co-operate and share resources and activities confidently. Older pupils learn about ways in which society operates and ways that different social behaviours can affect others.
41. The school fosters pupils' sense of responsibility towards others effectively. Pupils are actively encouraged to have a voice in decisions across the school, such as through the school council and voting for which charities to support, such as a bird conservation charity. The school's 'Eco Durlston' work includes several pupil-led initiatives designed to help look after the environment, such as coastal litter picks. Pupils also extend their understanding of conservation through activities such as visits to local museums and the New Forest.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 42. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

43. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns raised, including by liaising with and, when necessary, making referrals to relevant external agencies. The school has suitable arrangements for responding to any allegations or concerns about people working at the school. Safeguarding records contain clear information and meet the requirements of current statutory guidance. Governors receive regular safeguarding training and monitor the school's safeguarding arrangements effectively overall, including during regular school visits. However, at the start of the inspection, the safeguarding policy needed amending to ensure that it reflected current statutory guidance.
44. The safeguarding team are suitably trained to carry out their responsibilities. They keep up to date with local authority guidance about safeguarding matters. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, including about the 'Prevent' duty and through training for all staff whenever statutory guidance is updated. Staff also receive weekly updates about any safeguarding issues to be aware of. Staff new to the school complete comprehensive induction training about the school's safeguarding procedures.
45. Leaders apply their understanding from safer recruitment training to ensure that all required pre-employment checks for staff and governors are completed before they commence working at the school. These checks are recorded accurately in a single central record of appointments. Staff files are maintained in line with current statutory guidance.
46. Leaders encourage pupils to express any worries that they might have. Pupils can confidently identify trusted adults, such as form tutors, to whom they can turn should any concern arise.
47. The school teaches pupils how to keep safe, including when online. For example, they learn about the importance of using trustworthy sites and what to do if they have a concern. Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 48. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Durlston School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	850/6056
<b>Registered charity number</b>	307325
<b>Address</b>	Durlston School Becton Lane Barton On Sea New Milton Hampshire BH25 7AQ
<b>Phone number</b>	01425 610010
<b>Email address</b>	secretary@durlstonschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.durlstonschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Durlston Court School Trust Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Chandra Ashfield
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Richard May
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 16
<b>Number of pupils</b>	258
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 July 2023

## Information about the school

49. Durlston School is an independent co-educational day school. It is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. Initially founded in 1903 as a boarding school for male pupils, the school became co-educational in 1965 and a day school in 2000. Since the previous inspection, the school has extended its registration to cater for pupils aged up to 16 years, with the first intake into Year 10 this year.
50. There are 33 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class. There are 18 children in the Nursey and 15 children in the Reception class.
51. The school has identified 70 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Eleven pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
52. There are 4 children with English as an additional language.
53. The school states its aims are to deliver outstanding teaching and learning underpinned by the pursuit of excellence and high expectations for each individual child. It seeks to provide opportunities to fully explore and enjoy a wealth of sporting, creative, technological, and co-curricular activities. The school intends to develop resilient, well-rounded, self-disciplined, well-mannered, caring, confident young people. It aims to nurture integrity alongside sound moral values based on Christian traditions; promote an awareness and respect of other beliefs and faiths. The school endeavours to foster positive partnerships between pupils, parents and staff.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

24 to 26 September 2024

54. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

55. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the vice chair of governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

56. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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