

The Independent Grammar School: Durham

Claypath, Durham DH1 1RH

Inspection date

26 May 2022

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 3(i), 3(j), 4

- The proprietors have effective plans in place to support their request to increase the numbers and ages of pupils able to attend the school. There is a detailed curriculum policy that reflects the school's aims and ethos. The headteacher has produced additional curriculum documents that explain clearly how the curriculum will be implemented for older pupils if the proposed expansion of the school is approved.
- Leaders have developed an ambitious subject offer that mirrors the national curriculum. There are detailed and well-sequenced learning plans for all subjects and year groups, including the proposed Year 9. The proprietors have identified the need for additional specialist subject teachers if the material change request is approved. They have progressed plans for new posts in science, mathematics and English.
- Staff understand the needs of their pupils well. Some pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The headteacher ensures that pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) and those with SEND but no EHC plan are provided with appropriate additional support.
- Leaders ensure that the teaching of reading is prioritised across the school. Staff deliver a well-resourced, phonics-based reading scheme to all younger pupils. Staff are quick to identify and support any older pupils who are at the early stage of reading. Pupils show an enjoyment of reading in lessons and at social times. All pupils have personal reading books and there are small libraries in each classroom.
- The headteacher regularly checks what pupils know and can do. There is a well-established assessment system in place. The headteacher knows how to incorporate assessments for older pupils if the request to expand is approved.

Paragraphs 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(f), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 2A(1), 2A(1)(a), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2)

- There is a detailed programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). The

PSHE programme includes relationships and sex education. The headteacher brings in a wide range of visiting speakers to enhance the taught curriculum. Recently, for example, pupils have heard from a local farmer, a police officer, a lawyer and a political adviser. The headteacher completes risk assessments on visiting speakers.

- The headteacher has prepared a PSHE programme for Year 9 pupils ready to be delivered if the request to increase the age range of the school is approved. This programme covers topics aimed at helping pupils become more independent such as mental health awareness and how to cope with major life events.
- The proprietors have ensured that careers education is woven through the PSHE programme across the school. The headteacher has identified a local careers team who will offer individual advice and guidance sessions to Year 9 pupils if the request to take older key stage 3 pupils is approved.
- School leaders have ensured these standards are likely to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) decides to approve the material change.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi), 5(b)(vii), 5(c), 5(d), 5(d)(i), 5(d)(ii), 5(d)(iii)

- Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is an extensive assembly programme. The assembly programme is carefully planned and covers different faiths and cultures. Staff follow up on the ideas and issues raised in assemblies through small group meetings. Pupils learn how to share their views. Pupils trust leaders to take their views into account when making decisions about the school.
- There is a rich extra-curricular programme. Pupils appreciate the school trips they go on and the clubs that run at lunchtime and after school. Leaders develop pupils' talents and interests well. The range of clubs and activities includes debating, gymnastics and gardening. The headteacher has plans to broaden the enrichment programme for older pupils if the material change goes ahead.
- Pupils learn how to take responsibility for themselves and others. The headteacher regularly sets pupils challenges to work on. Challenges such as reciting a poem in public or taking part in a charity event are undertaken.
- School leaders have ensured these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- There is a child protection and safeguarding policy which is compliant with current statutory guidance. The policy is detailed and expectations of staff are clearly described.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff constantly monitor pupils' well-being. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). He is knowledgeable and ensures staff implement the school's safeguarding systems effectively and consistently.

- Leaders prioritise safeguarding through regular training and supervision meetings with staff. The proprietors monitor safeguarding diligently. There is a director with responsibility for safeguarding and safeguarding is reported at the proprietors' monthly board meeting.

Paragraphs 11, 12

- The proprietors have established robust systems to maintain health and safety in the school. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and informed by statutory guidance. The headteacher ensures staff implement the school's health and safety policy. Staff are trained in health and safety. They check equipment, classrooms and play areas every day. Leaders ensure that specialist safety checks of the building, utilities and equipment are completed routinely.
- There is a fire risk assessment in place. The proprietors have sought advice from a fire safety consultant on any fire risks linked to the proposed expansion of the school. The consultant's report states that up to 110 pupils could be safely evacuated from the school if certain improvements were made to evacuation routes. The proprietors have completed all the improvements recommended in the report. There are three clearly signed evacuation routes with emergency lighting.
- Leaders run regular fire drills and the fire alarm system is checked weekly. The fire safety equipment is tested and serviced regularly. Staff are trained in fire safety and emergency evacuations. There are personal emergency evacuation plans for pupils who need them.

Paragraphs 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The school is calm and well ordered. Pupils are well supervised. Pupils say they feel safe and have high levels of attention and care from staff. The space for outdoor play is limited to a central courtyard. Leaders organise the school day so that breaktimes are staggered and the numbers of pupils playing in the courtyard at any one time are manageable. Leaders have thought carefully about how they will group pupils and deploy staff if pupil numbers rise to 95.
- Leaders know how to identify and manage risks at the school. There is a detailed risk assessment policy and a wide range of completed risk assessments. These risk assessments include the classrooms and play areas, off-site visits and the safe storage of hazardous substances. Pupils with SEND have individual risk assessments that are kept under regular review.
- School leaders have ensured these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- There is an up-to-date child protection and safeguarding policy which complies with current statutory requirements. The policy is published on the school website and easily accessible to parents and carers.
- School leaders have ensured that this standard is likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the implementation of the material change.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- The proprietors have a vision for their school which is shared by staff and parents. Leaders have high expectations of the pastoral care and academic challenge provided to pupils. The school has grown quickly since it opened in 2018. The expansion of the school from four pupils in September 2018 to 63 in May 2022 has been managed well. Leaders have thought through any further expansion carefully. The plans for pupil admissions, staffing and timetabling within the existing school building are well considered.
- The proprietors have the skills and knowledge to support and challenge school leaders. The headteacher is an experienced leader. Staff are confident that leaders will manage any future change well.
- The proprietors ensure staff are provided with training and professional development. All staff are trained in child protection and wider safeguarding. The DSL has attended enhanced safeguarding training and knows how to get help for children who need it. He regularly checks staff's safeguarding knowledge. The DSL keeps accurate records of any safeguarding concerns or child protection referrals. He monitors the progress and outcome of referrals carefully.
- The proprietors are aware of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. These duties are met through the taught curriculum and through policies and protocols that promote equality and diversity. There is a plan in place to improve accessibility in the school. This accessibility plan is kept under review by the proprietors.
- School leaders have ensured these standards are likely to be met if the DfE decides to approve the material change.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	144804
DfE registration number	840/6015
Inspection number	10236878

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Proprietor	The Education Partnership (UK) Ltd
Chair	James Tooley
Headteacher	Chris Gray
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,300
Telephone number	07984619739
Website	www.igsdurham.com
Email address	principal@igsdurham.com
Date of previous standard inspection	26 to 28 March 2019

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	4 to 13	4 to 14	4 to 14
Number of pupils on the school roll	65	95	95

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed

Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	65	95
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	4	Up to 20
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	2	Up to 5
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	0	Up to 5

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	6	8
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	4

Information about this school

- The Independent Grammar School is located in church premises in Durham City.
- The proprietor is The Education Partnership (UK) Ltd, comprising three directors. One of the directors is the headteacher of the school.
- There are currently 65 pupils at the school. They are organised into three classes taught across four rooms. The Rainbow class is for the younger pupils and is taught in two groups.
- The previous standard inspection combined with a material change inspection took place in March 2019 and the school was judged to be good in all areas. There was a further material change inspection in February 2021 when it was judged that standards would be likely to be met if the material change was approved.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the DfE after the school applied to increase the number of pupils at the school from 65 to 95 and to raise the upper age of pupils from 13 to 14 years old.
- This was the third material change inspection at this school. The last material change took place in February 2021 when the proprietor sought to raise the upper age of pupils able to be admitted to the school to 13 years old. That material change was approved by the DfE.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and one other proprietor. She had a telephone meeting with the chair of the proprietor board. The inspector met with staff and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed curriculum documents and visited lessons. She toured the premises and checked the fire safety arrangements.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. She checked other policies and related documents against the relevant independent school standards.

Inspection team

Patricia Head, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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