

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Dame Allan's School

May 2019



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School's Details

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| School | Dame Allan's School | | | |
| DfE number | 391/6035 | | | |
| Registered charity number | 1084965 | | | |
| Address | Dame Allan's School Fowberry Crescent Fenham Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE4 9YJ | | | |
| Telephone number | 0191 275 0608 | | | |
| Email address | principal@dameallans.co.uk | | | |
| Principal | Dr John Hind | | | |
| Chair of governors | Mr Brian Adcock | | | |
| Age range | 11 to 18 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 805 | | | |
| | Boys | 449 | Girls | 356 |
| | Seniors | 601 | Sixth Form | 204 |
| Inspection dates | 08 to 10 May 2019 | | | |

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Dame Allan's School is an independent day school for girls and boys aged between eleven and eighteen years. Founded in 1705, the school is now part of Dame Allan's Schools. The company also includes Dame Allan's Junior School and is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, governed by the directors and trustees.
- 1.2 The school comprises separate senior schools for girls and boys and a co-educational sixth form.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has developed its facilities in science, drama and food studies. A combined cadet corps has been established.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to provide an environment which is nurturing and supportive, where pupils are encouraged to develop into the best that they can be. The school seeks to embrace technology, change and challenge in a way which motivates pupils and prepares them for the next stage of their lives.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from the city and surrounding area, predominantly from white British families, and also from other cultural heritages reflecting the local population. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average in the senior school and broadly average in the sixth form. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 189 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 97 of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 73 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified those pupils as being the most able in the school's population and the curriculum is modified for them and for those pupils who demonstrate special talents in the creative arts and sports.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools and in-line with selective maintained schools. Results at IGCSE have been higher than world-wide norms.
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2017 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.12 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 a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning, engaging rigorously in independent and collaborative tasks, resulting in rapid development of their knowledge, understanding and skills.
 - Pupils are excellent communicators, confidently applying their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing to all areas of their learning.
 - Pupils demonstrate great pride in their work as evidenced in excellent presentation.
 - Pupils achieve a high level of success in national and regional competitions in a wide range of disciplines.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils show outstanding personal and social skills.
 - Pupils are self-confident and well-prepared for the challenges they will face in the next stage of their lives.
 - Pupils across the school understand the importance of staying safe and adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:
- Enabling pupils to enjoy more opportunities for quiet reflection throughout the school day.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or English as an additional language (EAL), achieve very well. Pupils approach their academic studies with commitment and purpose, fulfilling the school's aim to challenge all pupils to be the best that they can be. Pupils' performance at GCSE and A level is above the national average for maintained schools. Results at IGCSE are above world-wide norms. Most pupils achieve their first choice university with many gaining entry into universities with demanding entrance requirements. Pupils in years 7 to 11 make rapid progress in the single sex environment of their separate schools, where the differentiated styles of teaching enable them to achieve their potential. Senior pupils in the co-educational sixth form work and socialise together without regard to gender, developing mature research and study skills. Pupils make excellent progress relative to their ability because they are effectively supported by staff who are well informed about each individual pupil's talents and learning needs, providing specialist teaching as needed. Pupils engage with whole-hearted enjoyment and achieve high levels of success in the extra-curricular programme provided by the school, including in literature, music, drama and debating. School teams achieve excellent success at national and regional levels in a range of sports. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme is popular, with large numbers of pupils achieving their gold award. Pupils' excellent achievements within, and outside, the classroom, are facilitated by the high expectations maintained by governors and senior leaders who systematically monitor standards of teaching and invest in specialist staff and high quality resources.

- 3.6 Pupils develop excellent study skills and extend their subject understanding through the well-balanced curriculum, high quality planning and the encouragement of their teachers. Pupils thrive in the family atmosphere of each of the three schools and make excellent progress as they respond to the carefully structured tasks prepared for them. In design and technology (DT), for example, boys gain a clear understanding of their task through additional demonstrations, while girls become more confident in their use of machinery through the active encouragement of their teachers. In the sixth form, pupils demonstrate their readiness for the next stage of their lives through a curriculum designed to develop their independent learning and research skills. In their extended project qualification folders, pupils exhibited high levels of competency in hypothesis, analysis and synthesis. In all year groups, pupils demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their written work, and when asked to undertake classroom tasks in pairs or small groups. Throughout the school, pupils with SEND or EAL achieve very well, benefiting from the high quality of support they receive, and frequently surpass individual targets. More able pupils broaden their knowledge through a school programme of study which has been specifically designed to challenge and extend their understanding. Pupils are able to improve their learning through teachers' very effective verbal feedback in lessons. Much of pupils' written work is carefully marked and offers guidance for improvement, but there is some inconsistency in the quality of the marking across all departments. In their responses to the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of pupils stated that their teachers actively and successfully promoted their learning and academic progress.
- 3.7 Pupils develop excellent communication skills. They articulate complex ideas with competency, effectively debating topical issues such as global trading and survival in less developed countries. In their modern language lessons, pupils speak with increasingly high levels of fluency and confidence, employing extended vocabulary and demonstrating excellent accents. At all ages, pupils broaden their understanding and English vocabulary through the texts they study, making rapid progress in their ability to deconstruct passages or explain plot development. Pupils approach their literature studies with creativity, often conjuring up adept solutions when confronted with difficulties: for example, when representing characters on the stage, pupils decided to use one blazer and two heads to overcome a casting problem with the witches in *Macbeth*. Pupils write skilfully, expressing complicated ideas with clarity and understanding. Throughout the school pupils listen carefully to each other, respectful of alternative points of view. They are attentive in the classroom, eager to learn and make progress in their studies. By the time they leave the sixth form, pupils are confident communicators, well supported by the encouragement they have received from their teachers.
- 3.8 Pupils throughout the school develop excellent numeracy, and information, communication and technology skills (ICT), applying them very effectively across the curriculum, strongly supported by well-planned teaching and high quality resources. Almost all of the year groups work with electronic devices such as tablets provided by the school, extending their education into the virtual classroom. They display very good technical skills, for example, using ICT to create two-dimensional designs for A-level DT projects, or downloading images and combining these with their own photographs to create seaside collages of flora and fauna, mythological sea creatures and shipping. Pupils demonstrate high levels of mental agility in mathematics extending their numerical competency into all subjects, for example, recording scientific data with accuracy, creating data analyses and confidently employing graphs to illustrate volcanic output.
- 3.9 Pupils display outstanding attitudes to learning, encouraged by the support of the staff and the high expectations of behaviour within the classroom. Pupils are self-disciplined and enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively as well as to undertake independent study. In physical education, pupils worked effectively together by demonstrating long jump techniques to achieve better individual results. In religious studies, pupils developed their memory skills through group work on *A Map from Memory* exercise. Pupils effectively utilise research skills in their independent learning, tackling tasks with strong concentration and commitment. They work with consistently dedicated focus in their lessons and their written work is presented with pride.

- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate excellent aesthetic, artistic and physical skills. Their artistic acumen is vividly presented in high quality displays throughout the school and musicians demonstrate their distinctive talents when performing in orchestras, bands, ensembles and choirs. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed overcoming the challenge of difficult rhythms as they rehearsed together in the ceilidh band while others tackled break dancing with gusto, producing synchronised movements with fluidity. Pupils achieve consistent successes in sports matches in a range of disciplines. Having gained a prestigious national environmental award, pupils were selected to explore turtle conservation abroad and participate in cleaning up beaches in the United Kingdom. The very large majority of pupils are appreciative of the help they receive from the staff, and in their questionnaire responses, parents expressed themselves as uniformly satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.11 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.12 Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of self-knowledge and self-esteem. They develop into mature, responsible young people who are respectful of others and are able to work effectively together to achieve common goals and solve problems. Pupils understand how to improve their learning and performance, showing high levels of concentration in lessons and pride in the way they choose to present their work. Pupils actively seek leadership roles which enable them to contribute positively towards their community, for example, senior pupils acting as self-appointed mentors for younger pupils on residential visits. Through the very effective pastoral network linking the boys' and girls' schools and the sixth form, together with the supportive encouragement they receive from those who teach them, pupils grow in self-confidence, developing strong self-discipline, resilience and leadership qualities. Although loyal to their own single-sex school within the overall school structure, pupils share a vibrant sense of common identity and are proud of each other's achievements and of their school.
- 3.13 Pupils develop excellent judgement, understanding the need for a strong work ethic and the impact their decisions make on the quality of their learning. They are empathetic, listening sensitively to each other and working successfully in collaborative tasks. They are eager to help each other improve, freely offering support and sharing their knowledge. Pupils understand how their decisions influence those around them, demonstrating commitment as representatives of their year groups and as officers of the school. When pupils from local junior schools attend masterclasses run by the school, senior pupils volunteer to help their teachers prepare and deliver lessons. As officers in their final year, pupils undertake training enabling them to assist in the daily running of the school, for example, overseeing lunchtime arrangements for the younger pupils. Two officers take on the additional responsibility for charitable-giving on behalf of the school, developing excellent organisational and motivational skills. Pupils become effective peer mentors trained to offer strategies to others to cope with the challenges of daily life and the stress of examinations. Well supported by the strong network of guidance from staff, pupils gain confidence in their pastoral and leadership roles.
- 3.14 Standards of behaviour are excellent and pupils are polite and well-mannered. They understand and respect the need for school rules and their exceptionally good behaviour is acknowledged in parents' responses to the questionnaire. Senior pupils are highly appreciative of the generosity with which their teachers help and support them, valuing the close-knit community spirit of their school. Older pupils in the sixth form have confidence in their tutors, expressing their appreciation of the guidance and support they receive as they prepare to embark on the next stage of their careers. Pupils develop into confident, considerate young people who understand the need for mutual respect and tolerance, as a result of the excellent pastoral support they receive, and opportunities to learn about others' cultures, ways of life, viewpoints, and religious beliefs and traditions.

- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate a highly developed sense of spiritual awareness underpinned by the strong moral ethos of the school. Through their art, music and drama activities, pupils gain a deeper understanding of the less tangible elements of the world about them. Pupils explore the emotions captured in music in their participation in orchestras, ensembles and choirs, and freely express themselves through a variety of media in their artwork. In their engagement with dance and drama, pupils display a sensitive understanding of the more subtle manifestation of emotion through movement and speech. Pupils discuss the impact of different religions on their spiritual development with maturity and sensitivity: whether fasting creates a deeper spiritual awareness; if life choices, such as abortion, should be dictated by a religious belief; or should a moral code be more important than the need to stay alive?
- 3.16 Pupils are thoughtful when considering current issues presented through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, displaying a strong moral sense in their discussions. Pupils participating in the *Relais de la Mémoire* programme, are able to argue cogently on human rights issues, both historical and in the contemporary world, sharing their thoughts with other young people living across Europe in a number of languages. Pupils understand the rationale for the emphasis the school places on mental and emotional welfare and value the opportunities to enjoy the school grounds and the pleasant outdoor seating areas. In discussions, pupils expressed a wish for quiet areas inside the school building where they could pause for moments of personal reflection during the school day.
- 3.17 Pupils display a robust understanding of the need to keep themselves safe. They are confident that the school is committed to providing a safe environment, listens to their views and concerns, and acts upon them. Through the PSHE programme, pupils develop a strong awareness of the safe use of technology. Pupils are confident that staff will support them should they have a concern and as a result they develop positive attitudes when dealing with difficulties. In discussions, pupils show excellent understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through balanced diets and appropriate exercise. Supported by the school's comprehensive science, PSHE and sports programme, pupils gain the confidence to take very full responsibility for their own well-being through sensible eating habits and appropriate exercise. Through the school council, pupils influence the choices they are offered at mealtimes. They feel well looked after if they are ill or hurt themselves, benefiting from the school's thorough medical provision.
- 3.18 The pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. They make continued gains in confidence as they move upwards through the school, with the majority of pupils electing to remain for the sixth form. Pupils discuss career options knowledgeably, feeling positive about their choices, benefitting from the excellent careers provision and advice which is embedded throughout their educational programme. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire were fully satisfied with the education and pastoral support provided by the school.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and a governor representative, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

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|----------------------|--|
| Mrs Pamela Leech | Reporting inspector |
| Mr Darren Morton | Compliance team inspector and team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school) |
| Mr Stephen Challoner | Team inspector (Director of staffing, HMC school) |
| Ms Lucy Matthews | Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school) |
| Mr Matthew Mostyn | Team inspector (Second master, HMC school) |
| Mr Steven Pearce | Team inspector (Head of faculty, HMC school) |
| Mr Neil Smith | Team inspector (Head, HMC school) |
| Dr Paul Thompson | Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school) |