



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring and Material Change Inspection Report

St Paul's Cathedral School

May 2023

School's details

School	St Paul's Cathedral School			
DfE number	201/6006			
Registered charity number	312718			
Address	St Paul's Cathedral School 2 New Change London EC4M 9AD			
Telephone number	0207 248 5156			
Email address	admissions@spcs.london.sch.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Simon Larter-Evans			
Chair of governors	Mr Robert-Jan Temmink KC			
Proprietor	The Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	269			
	Day pupils	242	Boarders	27
	EYFS	34	Juniors	196
			Years 1-6	
	Seniors	39		
	Years 7 & 8			
Date of inspection	22 May 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St Paul's Cathedral School is a co-educational day and boarding school. The school educates the male choristers for the cathedral from the age of 8, and they comprise the school's boarding community. Boarding accommodation is on the school site. Oversight of the school is delegated by the cathedral to a board of governors, led by an independent chair. The dean is vice-chair and three of the governing body are members of the cathedral chapter. The school has 21 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom has an education, health and care plan. Any pupil for whom English is an additional language is supported in class according to their needs. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in March 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection on 9-11 March 2022. 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. The educational requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework were not part of the focus of this inspection.
- 1.3 Additionally, this inspection serves as a material change inspection to assess the school's proposal to increase its capacity from 265 to 285.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
ISS Part 1 paragraph 3 (teaching)	Remains unmet
ISS Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils); NMS 3	Remain unmet
ISS Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 10	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 20	Met
ISS Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
ISS Part 4, paragraphs 18-21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietors); NMS 19	Met
ISS Part 5, paragraphs 23-30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 4 - 7	Met
ISS Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
ISS Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Remain unmet

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3]

- 2.1 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.2 As at the time of the previous inspection, teaching enables all pupils to make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge and the ability to think and learn for themselves. Teachers ensure that resources, teaching methods and activities are suitable for the needs of all pupils. The school ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted both in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. For example, musical pupils, both male and female, have a range of choirs and other ensembles open to them.
- 2.3 In response to the previous inspection, the school has begun to make progress with its plan to offer equality of opportunity to female pupils in becoming cathedral choristers. It now has identified a date when females will begin to be admitted as probationer choristers, namely September 2023. At the time of the inspection, some female pupils had expressed interest in taking up this opportunity. Whilst male choristers are required to be boarders at the school in order to facilitate choir practice, female choristers will be day pupils until such time as suitable boarding accommodation can be provided for them. The requirements of the Equality Act necessitate parity of provision for male and female choristers in all areas. Therefore, standards will not be met in the absence of accommodation for female boarders.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5; NMS 3]

- 2.4 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.5 Pupils appreciate the diversity of the school's population and assert that they are taught to respect one another from a young age, together with those with protected characteristics. They report that the school promotes a friendly and harmonious community. Inspection evidence from pupil discussions and observation confirms that this promotion is effective. The school's action plan demonstrates a firm commitment by the cathedral chapter to promote and support respect between genders by the creation of a girls' choir parallel with the boys' choir. Plans now being implemented are effectively designed to enable the school to comply with the Equality Act 2010 by educating female choristers. At the time of the inspection these plans had not yet been fully realised. Both male and female pupils told inspectors that they welcome the forthcoming introduction of the opportunity for female pupils to become choristers.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.6 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.7 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

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.

- 2.9 The school implements its safeguarding policy effectively. Suitable procedures for the induction of new staff ensure they have the requisite knowledge and understanding to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Staff receive regular, suitable training and updates from the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL is assisted by deputies in strategic posts such as in boarding and in the EYFS. They, and other key staff, have all undertaken appropriate higher-level training for their additional responsibilities. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of safeguarding issues and procedures, including the additional vulnerability of pupils with protected characteristics such as SEND. They readily report all concerns to the DSL and prompt action is taken, whether external referral or further support in school, such as from the mental health first aiders. The school has recently moved its recording of safeguarding and welfare concerns to a digital system which allows patterns and trends to be readily identified.
- 2.10 The school uses opportunities within the curriculum, such as in personal, social and health education to raise pupils' awareness of the consequences of inappropriate or thoughtless behaviour. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils, including the choristers, are confident that their trusting relationships with a number of staff enable them to readily share any concerns or anxieties, should they arise, that they receive a response, and that action is taken where needed. Records of safeguarding confirm that this is the case. The governing body, led by a nominated governor who is also a member of the cathedral chapter, maintains suitable oversight of safeguarding, and the DSL ensures governors are made aware of any significant concerns. The school's safeguarding team regularly liaises with safeguarding personnel at the cathedral to ensure the welfare of choristers. Arrangements are likely to continue to be effective with the proposed increase in the total number of pupils.

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's health and safety policy provides appropriate arrangements to promote the safety of pupils, staff and visitors. These ensure that plant and equipment, including in the boarding house, are suitably maintained to promote safety. Staff receive training relevant to their roles and assert that reporting mechanisms are effective in ensuring that any defects are remedied promptly. Existing effective procedures are likely to remain unaffected by increased numbers of pupils.

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

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 The school's arrangements for fire safety include suitable provision for the prevention of fire, including the assessment of fire risk, training for staff and pupils, and the maintenance of fire detection and fire-fighting equipment. Fire evacuation drills are carried out at appropriate intervals, including during boarding time, and records confirm these arrangements are correctly implemented. Existing measures are sufficient to serve the proposed increased numbers of pupils.

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

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 The school implements suitable measures to ensure that pupils are adequately supervised. Arrangements to supervise the arrival and departure of pupils are appropriate and sufficient staff are

deployed at breaktimes. These take into account the age of the pupils being supervised. There are suitable arrangements to supervise the choristers when travelling between school and the cathedral and during their time spent in the boarding house. Existing measures are sufficient to cater for the proposed increased numbers of pupils.

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

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.
- 2.18 The school has a systematic approach to managing risk. This is confirmed by scrutiny of a sample of risk assessments covering the school site, specialist rooms, riskier activities and visits away from school. Staff confirm a suitable understanding of how to assess and reduce risk for their areas of responsibility. They are also aware of the need for risk to be assessed for vulnerable pupils and means whereby such risks can be managed. Existing measures are sufficient to serve the proposed increased numbers of pupils.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 Arrangements for checking new staff and governors are guided by a thorough recruitment policy implemented successfully by staff who are trained in safer recruitment. The school carries out the required checks on staff which are recorded accurately on the single central register. Whilst current methodology is secure, staff files which hold associated evidence do not all reflect the thoroughness of the process and required some remediation prior to the inspection visit. Having identified this shortcoming, the leadership has arranged an external audit to assure itself that the process is now secure going forward. Cathedral staff who come into contact with choristers are suitably checked. Existing measures are sufficient to serve the proposed increased numbers of pupils.

Premises and accommodation – toilets and changing accommodation; medical accommodation; maintenance; acoustics, lighting and water supply; outdoor space and boarding accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23 – 30; NMS 4-7]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 The school has sufficient toilet and washing facilities for the proposed increase in the number of pupils. Changing and locker rooms and showers are similarly sufficient to provide additional capacity. The medical room is suitably staffed and provides appropriate accommodation and resources for attending to pupils' medical or first aid needs, including those of boarders. The school is maintained in good order.
- 2.23 The site and buildings have appropriate internal and external lighting. Acoustic conditions are suitable. Drinking water outlets are dispersed across the site and safety requirements for water supply are met. The classrooms, including specialist rooms, are of sufficient size and quantity to accommodate additional pupil numbers. Effective arrangements for pupils' lunch in several sittings enable current dining provision to accommodate the requested increased total number of pupils. The provision of food for boarders is appropriate. The two outside areas, including a large all-weather adventure play area are similarly of sufficient size for additional pupils to play. The school has suitable arrangements to use additional external facilities for games.
- 2.24 Boarding accommodation for the male choristers is appropriate. Centrally located on the school site, it provides a secure and comfortable environment for recreation, sleeping and study. There is suitable

provision for boarders to store their possessions and for their laundry. Having carefully assessed its site, governors and the leadership have commissioned effectively designed plans to extend this accommodation to include similar boarding provision for female choristers.

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

- 2.25 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; NMS 2]

- 2.26 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.27 Since the previous inspection the cathedral chapter, in conjunction with the school's leadership, have created a suitably detailed action plan for the introduction of girl choristers which will enable the school to offer equality of opportunity to both male and female pupils. The governing body has now accelerated the process to enable the recruitment of girls as probationer choristers from September 2023. Inspection evidence confirms regular meetings of the Girls Voices Project Board which serve to advance this project. This signals suitable intent on behalf of leadership and management to enable equality of opportunity, albeit parity in relation to boarding is unavailable until construction of additional boarding accommodation is complete.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 1, Quality of education provided - teaching [paragraph 3]

- The school must ensure that teaching meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to gender equality, by providing equal opportunities for female pupils to become choristers [paragraph 3(j)].

ISSR Part 2, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education [paragraph 5]

- The school must ensure that it encourages respect for other people, as required by the Equality Act 2010, by ensuring that educational opportunities are equal for all pupils irrespective of their gender [paragraph 5(b)(vi); NMS 3].

ISSR Part 8, Quality of leadership and management [paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- Governors and senior leaders must ensure that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met through the demonstration of good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfilling their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted. [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5].

4. Recommendation with regard to material change request

Summary of findings

- 4.1 The school's premises are suitable to accommodate the proposed increase in day pupil numbers including the proposed recruitment of female choristers from September 2023. The school's policies and procedures are also suitable for the proposed increase in numbers.

Recommendation

- 4.2 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its pupil capacity to 285 be accepted.

5. Summary of evidence

- 5.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the dean of the cathedral as vice chair of governors, and members of the Girls' Voices Project steering group. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece

Reporting inspector

Mr Graham Gorton

Assistant reporting inspector