

School inspection report

15 to 17 September 2026

Dame Allan's Schools

40 Fowberry Crescent

Fenham

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE4 9YJ

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'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have appropriate skills and knowledge to promote pupils' wellbeing effectively. Leaders at all levels prioritise pupils' wellbeing in their decision-making.
2. Governors exercise informed oversight of leaders' work through a suitable committee structure. They ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities to meet the Standards consistently.
3. Leaders in the early years promote an effective and nurturing setting. They maintain a clear focus on the children's academic, personal and social development. Staff working in the early years understand their responsibilities well.
4. Leaders have the skills to manage change effectively. This has been seen in the school's recent move to co-education. Supported by governors, leaders are able to anticipate needs, such as for further training. Governors and leaders implement a strategic plan which provides a suitable overview of development planning across the school.
5. Leaders and governors have a suitable understanding of risk. Risk management in the school is dynamic. Staff respond effectively to mitigate risks resulting from changing circumstances within the school or externally.
6. Leaders implement a suitable complaints policy which notes clearly the development of the different stages of a complaint and any longer-term response.
7. Teaching across the school is effective. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge. They employ an appropriate range of resources and teaching strategies to foster good progress for the pupils. Teachers use questioning that is suitably targeted so that pupils are encouraged to develop their initial answer and challenge themselves to find further precision and detail.
8. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified promptly. An effective system of pupil profiles informs teachers about strategies to support pupils. However, this information is not followed consistently in the senior school.
9. Leaders' oversight of pupils' progress is effective. From the early years onwards, pupils' performance is tracked in detail with regular meetings between pastoral and academic staff to ensure support for pupils connects all areas of a pupil's experience.
10. Teachers provide useful feedback on pupils' work. They employ a range of methods from verbal comments to detailed marking. Pupils follow instructions and interact positively with the feedback they receive, returning to completed work and answering further questions in ways which foster good progress.
11. Behaviour in all sections of the school is good. Pupils and staff understand the expectations of the behaviour policy and appreciate the importance of positive behaviour in shaping a constructive community.
12. Staff with responsibility for health and safety manage the school's provision effectively. The buildings and grounds are well maintained. There are systematic and frequent checks on all aspects of site safety, including fire procedures.

13. Leaders establish a school culture where the importance of community is emphasised in line with the school's aims. Pupils from the early years upwards readily undertake responsibilities and roles which contribute to the working of their class and school. Leaders facilitate an effective range of roles in the senior school from eco-councillors to charity prefects.
14. Safeguarding procedures promote pupils' wellbeing effectively. Staff understand that it is everyone's responsibility and first priority. Leaders promote effective pastoral care so that they can quickly identify if any pupil is at risk of harm.

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

Leaders should:

- ensure that support for pupils in the senior school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is consistent across the curriculum.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

15. Governors have a range of experience to monitor the work of leaders effectively. They know the school well. Governors visit the school regularly and spend time inspecting the site, talking to staff and observing lessons, reporting back to the governing body as a whole. They hear directly from pupils in presentations. Governors challenge the work of leaders appropriately.
16. Leaders establish a supportive culture which effectively promotes pupils' wellbeing within the school community. This is based upon consistent messages about shared purpose, the importance of mutual appreciation and playing one's part in something wider. Examples include discussions in assembly about the social benefits of communal singing, and lessons in the early years drawing on examples from children's experience to teach them about aspects of each other's lives.
17. Leaders in the early years promote children's development across a broad curriculum with some specialist teaching in place. Through a personalised approach to learning, teachers provide suitable levels of challenge and support. Children make good progress with understanding how their learning applies in the world beyond school.
18. Leaders undertake effective self-evaluation. The move to co-education followed extensive consultation. Leaders have the skills to manage the pace of this change appropriately with clear communication. Leaders make space to listen to pupils' views, such as at breakfast when leaders hear directly from the pupils. Leaders also commission external audits of their provision, from premises to safeguarding, to help their understanding of any needed developments.
19. Leaders of teaching visit lessons regularly and have a suitable understanding of the nature of the school's provision. They allow an appropriate degree of autonomy for departments and teachers to personalise their planning whilst also establishing suitable shared expectations. In the junior school, leaders have a clear commitment to ensuring the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, with curriculum decisions informed by previous experience, assessment information and identified areas for development. Leaders promote important learning skills, shared with the pupils as six key behaviours, such as 'strive' and 'focus'.
20. Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of risk. Staff review risk assessments and the strategic register regularly, supported by external auditors. Leaders understand the context of risk for the school and plan to mitigate possible harm. They ensure there are risk assessments in place for visits beyond the site, for the site itself and for particular activities. Should they be needed, risk assessments are drawn up for pupils with a particular vulnerability.
21. A clear and detailed accessibility plan supports the further development of access to the curriculum for pupils. It details a range of adjustments in response to physical and sensory needs, including colour blindness. Measures to support individual needs include improved signage, additional ramps and the widening of access points for wheelchair users. In this way, leaders ensure that no pupils are discriminated against, and the school fulfils its duty under the Equality Act 2010.
22. Leaders work well with external agencies, such as the local authority. They report when a pupil joins or leaves the school at a non-standard transition time. The details of pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) are shared, as required.

23. Leaders ensure that all appropriate information is made available to parents, mostly via the school's website. A range of policies can be viewed and downloaded. Policies are reviewed and updated to meet the requirements of current statutory guidance. Parents receive thorough reports about their child's progress.
24. Leaders implement an appropriate complaints policy with clear timelines for the management of a complaint. The policy is implemented effectively, and suitable records are kept, including for complaints made informally. Leaders' and governors' oversight of complaints is appropriate. They monitor the complaints log for any trends and reflect upon actions taken and any lesson learned.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

25. Leaders implement a broad curriculum which covers all required areas of learning. Subjects range from dance to enterprise and additional optional courses such as the Higher Project Qualification (HPQ), where pupils pursue a particular enthusiasm and develop their project management and research skills. Leaders in the early years provide an effective curriculum which balances adult-led activities with learning through play. The curriculum is responsive to the children's interests whilst maintaining effective sequencing. Across the junior school, the curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching for subjects, including French and music. Teachers lead an effective programme for outdoor education, where pupils develop their resilience and their understanding of risk-taking.
26. Teachers in the early years promote the children's development of communication skills effectively through using their individual knowledge of the children to help them develop their oral language. Teachers provide practical activities which promote children's understanding of the world around them, such as making a connection between the list of class birthdays and the development of the seasons.
27. Pupils use their mathematical skills effectively. They can articulate how they arrive at a solution and apply their mathematical understanding in a range of contexts, such as in the use of statistics in humanities lessons. Teachers ensure that real-world examples help prepare pupils for time beyond school. Pupils make good progress in science. They are able to draw upon previous learning effectively and make insightful predictions about experimental outcomes.
28. In English lessons, teachers' planning is effective. Staff in the junior and senior schools model formal discourse to enhance the precision of pupils' understanding with the use of specialist vocabulary. Languages teachers prompt pupils to take risks and develop their communication skills. Teachers use the language being studied for instructions and explanations as appropriate.
29. Teachers develop pupils' creative and aesthetic skills effectively. They combine rigour in the exploration of a particular discipline, such as dance, with broadening pupils' cross-curricular understanding, when they make links in music between the development of the blues and the history of racism in America.
30. Pupils make good progress. In the early years, results are above the national average for achieving the early learning goals. At GCSE level, data shows pupils making good progress from their starting points.
31. Teachers have suitable levels of subject knowledge. They plan lessons effectively and use a broad range of resources. They provide opportunities for pupils to learn about appropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI), such as when they create their own revision materials.
32. Subject leaders ensure that appropriate schemes of work are in place and that pupils take opportunities to make connections across subjects. Schemes of work are suitably sequenced and show tasks which offer greater challenge.
33. Pupils who have SEND are, in the main, effectively supported. Teachers employ strategies which include visual instructions and the use of different learning spaces within the classroom. In the junior school, support for language acquisition within lessons by specialist staff is effective. Useful information from specialist staff is shared in individual learning profiles and followed effectively.

However, this is not applied consistently in the senior school, and not all teachers are effective at implementing strategies from pupils' learning profiles. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as possible.

34. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress. Teachers provide help as needed, such as through targeted support for writing, including specialist vocabulary lists, and by sharing strategies to help sustain focus.
35. Leaders implement effective tracking systems for pupils' progress which helps identify when further support is needed. When this is the case, teachers act quickly as required. Leaders of teaching track groups of pupils, such as by gender or levels of prior attainment. They are well informed about pupils' progress and factors that may affect a pupil's performance.
36. Leaders facilitate a wide range of co-curricular activities, which encompass sports, music, technology and academic activities. Following a co-curricular fair, teachers guide pupils to identify activities that will suit them best with a view to life after school. The activities are taught by staff with suitable subject expertise, from ceramics to debating to playing the Northumbrian pipes. Through participating, pupils widen their range of knowledge and skills, including those for social interaction and collaboration.

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

37. Leaders provide a variety of opportunities for pupils to develop self-confidence. Pupils speak to a range of audiences from tutor groups to public events. Confidence is fostered within lessons with pupils being asked to make choices and to present to peers. This is complemented by lessons in the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme that include effective guidance on managing self-esteem. In the early years, children are generally keen to participate, express their views and seek support. Through PSHE lessons and those for relationships education, pupils across the junior school are supported to develop confidence, self-knowledge and positive attitudes towards their wellbeing, knowing their concerns will be listened to.
38. Leaders ensure that pupils develop their appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Pupils are attentive and engaged when responding to aesthetic stimuli, for example when singing together. They engage well with events such as Remembrance Day and develop an appreciation of their environment through outdoor learning lessons.
39. The PSHE programme is effective in supporting pupils' personal development. Teachers liaise closely with leaders of safeguarding to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to pupils' emerging needs. Pupils complete surveys to share views on the effectiveness of sessions and to guide future content.
40. Leaders provide an effective programme for relationships and sex education (RSE). They ensure that parents are consulted about the content of the course and that they are made aware of the extent of their right to withdraw their child. In age-appropriate lessons, pupils develop their understanding of topics such as personal boundaries and the basis for a healthy relationship.
41. Leaders are alert to pupils' emotional wellbeing. They gain pupils' views through regular surveys so that they can respond to how pupils are feeling. A system of daily check-ins operates in the junior school. This keeps teachers' knowledge of their pupils current and supports the pupils in reflecting on their feelings. Leaders provide 'the snug' as a quiet and supportive space and this is well used by pupils at times when they need somewhere to relax.
42. The behaviour policy is effective. Pupils understand the school's system of rewards. Staff respond to and record behaviour incidents appropriately, and explanations for actions are clearly noted. Leaders ensure that appropriate structures are in place so that the school is compliant with recent guidance on mobile phone use. Pupils' phones are secured in magnetic pouches during the school day. Pupils understand the reasons for this in terms of their behaviour and wellbeing.
43. Teachers follow an effective anti-bullying strategy. This teaches pupils about the nature of bullying, its consequences and what can help reduce the risk of an incident occurring. Pupils are confident that teachers would deal with an incident quickly should one occur.
44. The effective oversight of health and safety includes a termly visit from governors and external audits. These are undertaken for different aspects of provision, from fire prevention to safety at work and the storage of chemicals. Suitable health and safety records are kept, including a log of near misses, so that future processes can be improved. The premises are well maintained, and a responsive system is in place for staff to report any maintenance needs. When one is identified, staff respond quickly.

45. Leaders ensure that pupils are appropriately supervised. Pupils know how to find an adult at all times. In the early years, all required ratios are adhered to, including when children are eating and drinking.
46. Leaders ensure that appropriate admission and attendance registers are kept. The school's processes comply with recent changes to statutory guidance. Staff report any extended absence, as required, to the local authority. Teachers register pupils in individual lessons and procedures for following up any absences are effective.
47. Leaders ensure there is suitable medical support for pupils. Medical storage is secure and clear records are kept. There is a robust and appropriate system for the administration of medicines, including controlled drugs. The medical centre has sufficient facilities to ensure pupils' care and privacy. Staff are appropriately trained, including in paediatric and outdoor first aid.
48. Teachers ensure that children in the early years develop their physical skills in lessons such as 'funky fingers', where children develop their fine motor skills using a variety of media from clay to immersing toys in water.
49. Knowledgeable staff provide effective and inclusive lessons in physical education. They develop pupils' range of skills and help pupils identify physical activities to pursue beyond school. Teachers have the experience and knowledge to support pupils who have a particular talent at a high level.

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

50. Leaders implement an effective curriculum for economic education. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of budgeting and facilitate practical experiences of shaping a product and marketing it in enterprise lessons. In the sixth form, teachers guide pupils in understanding salaries and taxation in preparation for life beyond school.
51. Leaders have established a new strand of careers education as part of the PSHE curriculum. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about university and work. Older pupils are well supported across a range of pathways, including degree apprenticeships. Teachers provide a 'future Thursdays' programme where external speakers introduce pupils to a range of careers and different workplaces.
52. Leaders develop pupils' understanding of different faiths through lessons in religious and philosophical studies (RPS). This is enhanced by visits to places of worship and key messages in assemblies, along with special events, such as an international day. Pupils understand how the school's Anglican traditions underpin its aims. Pupils are respectful in their relationships with each other and with staff, and value each other's diverse backgrounds.
53. In PSHE lessons, assemblies and tutor times, pupils develop their understanding of British values. This is supported by staff modelling values, such as respect. Pupils participate in democratic activities, such as when sixth-form pupils vote for changes in provision. Teachers develop understanding of the rule of law in the early years when children come to appreciate the importance of rules and the consequences of these not being followed. Older pupils discuss the legal position with regard to issues such as consent or substance misuse. This is complemented by events in Parliament week which enhance the pupils' knowledge of British institutions.
54. Leaders encourage pupils to support each other so that they have well-developed social skills. For example, SEND ambassadors advocate for fellow pupils. Peer mentors undertake training on basic counselling skills and provide effective support for their peers. In the early years, high expectations teach children to work together constructively. Nursery children settle quickly and focus well on collaborative tasks. The children help with the register, using musical instruments to count the classmates who are present whilst also developing their understanding of number. Older junior school pupils volunteer as buddies to help new pupils. Teachers expect and guide appropriate social behaviour with courteous greetings and supportive comments from pupils for their peers.
55. Leaders provide opportunities for the pupils to engage appropriately with the local community. Pupils develop their understanding of volunteering in work with local primary schools. They act as helpers at a riding centre for disabled children and visit local care homes regularly. These activities develop pupils' empathy and widen their social understanding. Pupils initiate projects, including environmental initiatives, such as the sixth-form garden. Leaders emphasise the value of partnerships as they develop pupils' understanding of charitable contribution. For example, the junior school's art link with Zambia is well established and involves sharing resources and collaborating on projects.
56. Pupils understand the different aspects that make up an individual's identity. Leaders bring this about through focused special events such as in response to Black History Month. They invite

outside speakers to share their experiences and develop pupils' understanding of matters such as disability awareness.

57. Staff effectively develop pupils' understanding of right from wrong. In the early years, children expect to share and support each other as they develop their understanding of fairness. In the junior school, older pupils talk through scenarios in PSHE lessons to understand the consequences of chosen actions. This understanding is developed across the curriculum in the senior school, where pupils discuss moral choices for characters in literary study, historical injustices, politicians' debates and appropriate uses of science. Lessons for the extended project qualification allow pupils to explore these in sustained case studies on a wide range of themes.

Safeguarding

58. Governors exercise effective oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures. They receive regular reports and meet leaders of safeguarding to ensure that safeguarding practices follow the most current statutory requirements. Safeguarding procedures are drawn together effectively in a governors' annual audit.
59. Staff training for safeguarding is regularly updated in line with statutory guidance. When there is a concern, staff respond quickly. They understand their responsibility under the 'Prevent' duty in combatting radicalisation. Staff know the importance of reporting a low-level concern, including making a self-referral, as part of keeping everyone safe. Leaders of safeguarding are trained to a suitably higher level. They understand the contextual factors for safeguarding in the school, from the prevalence of online risks to the proximity to a city centre.
60. Staff ensure that safeguarding records are well maintained and detailed. They show the actions taken in response to each aspect of a concern, with clear details of timelines and longer-term outcomes and support. Leaders ensure that records are managed with appropriate levels of confidentiality. Any restrictive interventions are appropriately logged in line with statutory guidance.
61. The pupils know where they should go to share any concern. They can identify leaders of safeguarding whilst they also understand that they can approach any trusted adult. They make use of an online system which allows them to share anonymously any worry they might have. Pupils are well supported to understand risks, and to develop safe and respectful relationships.
62. Lessons in PSHE and computing teach pupils effectively to stay safe online, and include guidance on the appropriate use of AI. The school's processes for filtering and monitoring the use of the internet are suitably rigorous. Specialist staff test the system on an annual basis. The school issues laptops to the pupils and leaders are vigilant in controlling and monitoring what pupils can access.
63. Leaders of safeguarding work well with external agencies, such as the local authority and, if necessary, the police. They take advice as needed and understand the thresholds that operate, and when and how the school should press for further support for a pupil's wellbeing.
64. Leaders ensure that all necessary safer recruitment checks are undertaken before an adult begins work at the school. The school's procedures for checks on volunteers meet the statutory requirements. Staff record all checks accurately on a single central record of appointments and maintain files appropriately.

School details

School	Dame Allan's Schools
Department for Education number	391/6035
Registered charity number	1084965
Address	Dame Allan's Schools Senior School Fowberry Crescent Fenham Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 9YJ
Phone number	0191 275 0608
Email address	enquiries@dameallans.co.uk
Website	dameallans.co.uk
Proprietor	Dame Allan's Schools
Chair	Mr David Arthur
Headteacher	Mr Neil Seaton
Age range	3 to 18
Number of pupils	1164
Date of previous inspection	17 to 19 October 2023

Information about the school

65. Dame Allan's Schools is a co-educational day school located near the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne. Its senior school is for pupils aged 11 to 18. The junior school and nursery, for pupils aged 3 to 11, is located on a separate site a mile away. The address for this school is Hunter's Road, Spittal Tongues, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4NG
66. Since the previous inspection, these two schools have merged to become Dame Allan's Schools in October 2023. Pupils in Years 7 to 10 moved to co-education from September 2026. Pupils in Years 7 to 10 moved to co-education from September 2026. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors was appointed in February 2024. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2026.
67. There are 53 children in the early years in one Nursery and two Reception classes.
68. The school has identified 231 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
69. The school has identified English as an additional language for 87pupils.
70. The school states its aims are to prepare young people who are capable, confident and ready for the future. It aims to offer an education that is principled and progressive where pupils develop empathy, mutual respect and better understanding, preparing young people not just for exams but for life beyond the school gates.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

15 to 17 September 2026

71. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

72. 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 governors
- discussions with the headteacher, 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 including with staff and pupils
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

73. 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**.

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