



Material Change Inspection Report

Falcons School

October 2023

School's details

School	Falcons School			
DfE number	212/6051			
Address	Falcons School 7, 11, 22 and 24 Woodborough Road Putney London SW15 6PY			
Telephone number	020 8992 5189			
Email address	admin@falconsschool.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Sara Williams-Ryan			
Chair of governors	Sir John Ritblat			
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	124			
	EYFS (Peregrines Nursery)	43	EYFS (Reception)	14
	Prep School (Years 1 to 6)	67		
Date of inspection	10 October 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Falcons School is a day school for pupils aged two to eleven. It is currently a single-sex school for female pupils. It incorporates Peregrines Nursery, a co-educational Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting for children aged two to four. The school is owned and governed by the Alpha Plus Group. The school comprises four buildings on two sites, located close to each other on the same road. Children in Nursery and Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are accommodated on one site and older pupils on the other. The school has 13 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 51 pupils. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in March 2020.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to extend co-education throughout the school. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 2A (relationships education)	Met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 – 29 (premises and accommodation)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (quality of leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum and relationships education [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 and 2A]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 The school has given effective thought to how to ensure equality of opportunity for male and female pupils and the standards are likely to continue to be met if the material change request is granted. Leaders have considered the implications for the curriculum and teaching of a co-educational setting. They have done so in the same way as they take the aptitudes and needs of all pupils into account. Staff, many of whom have experience with co-education or in teaching male pupils, have received focused training, such as on differing learning styles, and more is planned. Books and resources have been audited to ensure a suitable gender balance. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to assess any required amendments. They are aware, for example, that some topics in relationships education will need a different approach to be taken for older pupils in a co-educational setting.
- 2.3 Leaders have also considered implications for sport effectively. Many of the sports currently played, such as cricket and hockey and individual pursuits such as cross country, are immediately accessible to male pupils. Currently, female pupils play some fixtures against co-educational teams. Further sporting opportunities are planned in response to pupils' interests when the school becomes fully co-educational.
- 2.4 The curriculum is suitably documented, supported by appropriate schemes of work and is sufficiently broad. The school seeks to give pupils appropriate skills for later life. For example, a popular weekly course called life skills is offered which includes cookery, British Sign Language, gardening and first aid, all equally suitable for both male and female pupils.

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

- 2.5 The school meets the standard.
- 2.6 Treating all with dignity and respect is a key aim of the school, alongside being an inclusive community where diversity is celebrated. Staff model desired behaviour effectively and respect is promoted appropriately through cultural visits and speakers, pupils sharing their own lived experiences, and assemblies. Events such as dyslexia awareness week enable difference to be explored and affirmed positively. Pupils and staff confirm that behaviour in school is usually respectful. Pupils asserted that whilst recognising they are all uniquely different, they feel they are all part of the jigsaw that results in their happy school community. The standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.7 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.8 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

- 2.9 The school meets the standard.

- 2.10 The school implements its safeguarding arrangements effectively in accordance with its policy. New staff receive comprehensive training to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff are trained, including in multi-agency working, at a suitable level for their responsibilities. Following training, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) checks staff knowledge and understanding through questionnaires. Senior leaders are all trained to advanced safeguarding level. Records confirm that safeguarding, welfare and behavioural concerns are recorded in sufficient detail. They are cross-matched at an individual level so that leaders gain a holistic view of pupils' needs. When necessary, the DSL contacts local safeguarding partners for advice.
- 2.11 Staff make themselves available to listen to pupils and pupils confirm their willingness to share any worries with a teacher. Pupils have access to a counsellor and a dedicated wellbeing hub. Staff respond appropriately to concerns by informing the DSL and recording the details. Suitable action is then taken when needed. Staff understand the different signs of abuse, including child-on-child abuse. Leaders and staff are aware that the introduction of co-education beyond the EYFS brings the potential for different safeguarding issues to those currently encountered. Staff know how to report any concerns about adults working with pupils to the head, including concerns which they regard as low level. The school has suitable filtering arrangements and monitors the use of technology effectively. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online in computing and personal, social and health education.
- 2.12 Governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. They maintain suitably robust oversight of safeguarding arrangements through regular reports and visits which include the required checks on safer recruitment. The annual safeguarding review is carried out with suitable rigour.
- 2.13 The standard is likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–29]

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for the pupils in each building. Plans for co-education include some suitable adaptation to provide separate toilet facilities above the age of eight, and changing facilities when required for older male and female pupils. Both sites have suitable accommodation for pupils' medical needs. All buildings provide pupils with suitable access to drinking water and water temperature in washrooms is appropriate. The premises are maintained to a suitable standard and staff confirm there are efficient arrangements to address any maintenance concerns. A tour of the school confirmed that acoustics and lighting are appropriate. The buildings provide suitable accommodation for general class teaching as well as specialist rooms for art, science, music, cookery and libraries. Both sites have sufficient outside space for recreation and physical education. Governors confirm that a new multi-sport surface will be laid on the upper school site later this academic year.
- 2.16 The standards are likely to continue to be met should the material change be approved.

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

- 2.17 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]

- 2.18 The school meets the standard.
- 2.19 Having successfully established co-education in the Nursery, the governors and school leaders have prepared effectively for the move to full co-education. The school is therefore ready to support the

education and promote the wellbeing of both male and female pupils effectively. The leadership has the requisite skills and knowledge to ensure that the standards are met. Evidence indicates that the independent school standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to extend co-education from its Nursery through to Year 6 be approved. The school's registered capacity will be unaffected.
- 3.2 The proprietor and leaders have ensured that the curricular programme is suitable for both male and female pupils. Staff have received additional training and learning resources checked to ensure their suitability for both sexes. There are sufficient washroom facilities and the proprietors have plans to adapt these for single-sex provision for older pupils as required by the standard.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors and director of early years. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.