

Dallington School

Aysa site: Castillo de Aysa, 8. Madrid 28043.

Sobradriel site: Ronda Sobradriel, 20. Madrid 28043.

School's regional authorisation number: BOE 28076678

Date of Inspection:

6th February 2026

Inspection Team:

David Russell (Lead Inspector)

Debbie Eaves (Team Inspector)

Reason for the Inspection:

To assess the school from Nursery to Year 12 for renewal of the current authorisation as British and to authorise expansion into Year 13.

Overall Recommendation:

The school is recommended for authorisation from Nursery (3 years old) to Year 13 (17 years old) for a period of 4 years.

The Sobradriel site has the capacity for 180 pupils (from Nursery to Year 1, including 30 for Dallington Infants) and the Aysa site has the capacity for 600 pupils from Year 2 to Year 13.

The next inspection is due in February 2030.

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History and Context of the School:

Dallington School opened its doors in 2015 and currently has 560 students on roll. The school has two separate sites. The Early Years and Foundation Stage is housed on the Sobradriel site. Primary and secondary sections are based on the Aysa site.

Dallington school is currently authorised as a British school for children from nursery age up to Year 12. The Sobradriel site has a capacity for 180 students and the Aysa site has a capacity for 600 students.

The purpose of this inspection is to assess the school for continued authorisation of Nursery to Year 12 and for its expansion into Year 13.

Accommodation and Resources:

The school has very good accommodation and resources which consistently enrich learning.

The Sobradriel site, which houses Nursery, Reception, and Year 1 classes, provides a stimulating and highly appropriate environment for early years education. The accommodation is well-organised, comfortable, and furnished to a high standard. The decoration is outstanding, serving both as a stimulus for pupil learning and a celebration of their work. A significant strength of this site is the immediate access to outdoor areas, which allow for a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor learning activities. These spaces are safe, secure, and feature a variety of learning zones, including a covered area for use in inclement weather and a gazebo utilised effectively as a library and music space. The site is very well resourced with a rich variety of materials and equipment, ensuring that all pupils have full access to the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

The Aysa site is comfortable, well-maintained, and clean. Both primary and secondary classrooms, as well as the corridors, are beautifully decorated with pupil work; these displays are informative and serve to celebrate learning across the curriculum. Classrooms are appropriate for current group sizes, and specialist rooms for secondary art and science are suitable for the delivery of the curriculum. The science laboratory is equipped with a fume cupboard and secure chemical storage, meeting necessary safety standards. Toilet facilities are suitable for the ages and numbers of pupils on site. Outdoor space for recreation is well-organised, while on-site physical education (PE) facilities are augmented by the use of off-site provisions to offer a wider variety of sports. PE resources are plentiful and varied. Accommodation for secondary staff preparation and meetings remains limited. The multipurpose indoor hall is used effectively for assemblies, drama, and indoor PE, and a dedicated individual study and library space has been developed to encourage independent research and reading among older students.

Resources are varied and stimulating across both the primary and secondary sections. A wide range of printed and practical resources is evident in lessons, and there is a good range of reading books available in all classes. The school's "Bring Your Own Device" policy allows pupils to use their own computers in computing lessons and across the wider curriculum. A bank of devices is available for year groups without personal computers. This effectively enables independent research and ensures that pupils develop the digital literacy skills required for the next stage of their education.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

The school is very well maintained and implements robust arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all students and staff.

A culture of care is deeply embedded across both sites, and as a result, students feel safe. Child protection is a clear priority for the school, supported by extensive policies and guidelines for staff regarding safeguarding and anti-bullying. These procedures are not merely administrative; they are implemented effectively to ensure the physical and emotional security of all children. During discussions, students expressed that they feel known and valued by both staff and school leadership. They are confident in identifying who to speak to regarding any worries and feel that staff are always available to provide support.

This high level of care extends to the curriculum and daily routines. For example, risk assessments in secondary science practical lessons are taken seriously and integrated into the learning process. Throughout the school day, including recreation times, there is adequate and proactive supervision of pupils. The school's commitment to safety is further evidenced by well-understood accident procedures and the clear display of evacuation maps throughout the buildings. Fire evacuation practices are held periodically; consequently, students are well-rehearsed in these protocols and demonstrate a clear understanding of the actions required in an emergency.

The Curriculum:

The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum based on the National Curriculum, offering learning experiences that support students' development.

The EYFS framework is implemented effectively, and the school adheres to the National Curriculum across all Key Stages. In the secondary section, the IGCSE and A Level programmes are followed, with a suitably wide variety of subjects offered to meet the interests and aspirations of the students. The range of options at IGCSE is appropriate, and successful external accreditation is achieved at the end of Key Stage 4. As the school expands, the Key Stage 5 curriculum has been developed to include sufficient coverage and preparation for Spanish pre-university courses, alongside the British A Level programme. Adequate time is dedicated to both British and Spanish curriculum subjects. English is the language of instruction in all National Curriculum lessons; consequently, students' speaking and listening skills are highly developed through the successful modelling of language by teachers. Furthermore, the use of cross-curricular projects provides meaningful opportunities for students to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Teachers adapt their planning to meet the specific needs of their students, with particular attention paid to accommodating those with specific learning needs. Individual education plans (IEPs) are developed for these students, providing teachers with detailed information regarding their requirements and specific strategies to support their learning. This ensures that all students, regardless of their starting points, are able to access the curriculum and make consistent progress.

In Key Stage 5, dedicated time is allocated on student timetables for careers guidance. Students follow a structured programme that allows them to explore future options, investigate diverse career paths, and research universities both in the UK and internationally. This individualised approach is supported by the development of personal portfolios of evidence relating to their career plans. The school provides

specific Spanish university guidance, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the transition to higher education within the Spanish system if they choose that pathway.

Staffing:

The school is staffed by well-qualified and experienced practitioners. While school growth and staff turnover have led to changes in personnel, these transitions are managed with care; recruitment and induction processes effectively prioritise the maintenance of the school's unique culture and high educational standards.

Teachers are deployed effectively across the school, with a strategic approach to timetabling that ensures spare teaching hours are utilised to support pupil learning directly within lessons. This flexible use of staff allows for targeted intervention and additional support, which has a positive impact on student progress. Access to continuing professional development (CPD) is facilitated through online platforms.

To ensure the continuity of the school's ethos during periods of growth, a successful 'buddy system' is in place. This provides new members of staff with structured peer support during their induction, allowing them to integrate quickly and effectively into the school community. School leadership is heavily involved in supporting staff in their professional communications, particularly in dealing with parents. This collaborative approach ensures a consistent message is maintained and provides teachers with the necessary backing to manage parental expectations effectively, further contributing to the positive morale observed across the teaching body.

Teaching and Learning:

The overall standard of teaching is high across all phases of the school, resulting in good pupil progress; all observed lessons were of good quality, with a significant proportion characterised by outstanding learning.

A hallmark of the school's success is the consistent use of accurate spoken English by teachers, which directly supports the development of pupils' strong speaking and listening skills. Lessons are thoughtfully structured and varied, ensuring a healthy balance between whole-group instruction and individual interaction. High-quality planning ensures that lesson time is used effectively, with a well-judged pace that keeps learners motivated and focused. Teachers successfully plan fun into the curriculum; consequently, pupils demonstrate a genuine desire to learn and a high level of enthusiasm. Teacher-pupil interactions are universally positive, underpinned by high expectations of behaviour and established routines. This creates a secure environment where pupils are eager to participate and take pride in their output; indeed, the presentation of written work across subjects is exceptional.

Active and collaborative learning is a core strength of the school's pedagogy. Pupils are frequently given opportunities to share ideas in both small groups and whole-class settings, and they demonstrate the ability to work highly productively in teams. Teachers are actively teaching, constantly moving throughout the classroom to reinforce or extend learning as appropriate. A key feature of the most successful lessons is the use of varied and effective questioning to promote deep thinking and reasoning. Challenge is evident in every classroom, with teachers using insightful prompts to move learning on at a pace that matches the students' abilities.

In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were set a series of timed, collaborative problems that maintained a high level of engagement and a purposeful pace. While pupils shared ideas and developed problem-solving strategies in groups, the teacher actively monitored the room, using targeted questioning to guide thinking and provide encouragement where needed. The activity transitioned smoothly from group work to an individual task, requiring pupils to demonstrate their skills independently. Pupils then shared their solutions using mini-whiteboards, allowing the teacher to provide immediate feedback and deeper explanations as required. Despite a high level of challenge, pupils participated enthusiastically, underpinned by the school's safe and positive classroom culture. The choice of challenging yet accessible tasks ensured that all students could participate meaningfully and make tangible progress.

In a Year 10 science lesson on energy changes in chemical reactions, the teacher designed a highly engaging escape room activity. Students worked in small groups to solve a series of challenges of varying degrees of difficulty, with their solutions forming a final code to exit the activity. This interesting and fun approach ensured full pupil participation and high levels of motivation. Throughout the lesson, the teacher maintained a clear overview of progress, providing targeted guidance and support to groups as necessary. Extension tasks were readily available, allowing students to transition smoothly from collaborative work to an individual review of their learning. The lesson concluded with a purposeful plenary that reinforced key knowledge of thermochemistry and directly addressed the specific concepts students had found most challenging, demonstrating an effective use of collaborative learning and questioning to move learning forward.

Assessment:

The school's approach to assessment is rigorous in terms of frequency, providing a solid foundation for tracking pupil attainment.

Monitoring pupil progress against standard target grades is an established practice; for instance, IGCSE mock grades are regularly compared against predicted outcomes. However, the school currently uses predictions from standardised testing primarily to compare performance retrospectively rather than as a proactive tool for target setting. Consequently, baseline data is not yet fully utilised to guide daily teaching or to strategically add value to pupil attainment.

Internal tracking is conducted regularly across all phases, and marking is generally informative. In the best examples, particularly within the primary phase, written feedback provides pupils with a clear indication of how well a task has been completed and offers specific suggestions for improvement. While there is clear evidence of regular marking across the whole school, this high standard of informative feedback is more consistently applied in primary than in secondary subjects, where the approach remains variable.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

Pupils across all phases consistently demonstrate positive behaviours for learning and an enthusiasm for school life; they are highly motivated and show a genuine desire to learn.

Collaborative learning is a pervasive strength observed across all subjects and phases of the school. Such activities and projects significantly benefit social development, as pupils are encouraged to communicate effectively, negotiate roles, and work

productively in teams. This collaborative spirit is underpinned by a well-structured personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme that purposefully develops the social and emotional aspects of learning and cultural awareness. A key strength of the PSHE provision is its flexibility; school leaders adapt the curriculum responsively to address emerging internal or external issues, ensuring the content remains relevant to the pupils' lives.

The "Dallington Values" are not merely a set of rules but a deeply embedded culture into which the entire community has aligned. This ethos is consistently reinforced through the attitudes of leaders, teachers, and the students themselves, creating an environment where positive relationships are promoted at all times. Because these values are so well understood and lived, the school functions as a cohesive community where mutual respect is the norm. This strong moral and social framework provides the necessary security for pupils to engage deeply with their studies and contributes significantly to the excellent standards of behaviour and participation seen throughout the school.

Leadership and Management:

Leadership and management are effective and inspire high educational standards. School leaders provide a clear, strategic vision that has successfully navigated a period of growth while maintaining the school's core values.

The school's leadership has cultivated a powerful shared vision and high aspirations that are fully embraced by the entire community of staff and students. This aspirational culture has fostered a spirit of collaboration that filters through every part of the school, resulting in highly effective teams and a safe, productive learning environment. Leadership's motivation directly impacts teacher and pupil attitudes, maintaining the high standards of learning and positive conduct observed throughout the inspection. This strong sense of collective purpose ensures that the core values remain at the heart of the school's identity as it expands.

The school is very well organised and efficiently run, with strategic planning that effectively addresses the complex needs of an expanding school. Senior leaders monitor standards and attainment, ensuring that resulting actions feed directly into the school development plan to improve the educational experience for all pupils. This includes ensuring that essential resources are consistently provided to support high quality learning. While senior and middle management are currently effective, delegated responsibilities could be made clearer and time allocated to discharge them. By further embedding the comprehensive use of data to inform this strategic oversight, leadership will ensure that the school continues to add significant value to pupil attainment.

Response to the previous inspection report:

The school has responded very well to the previous recommendations, integrating them effectively into strategic development over the last four years. Teachers feel valued and supported by a leadership team that actively listens to their professional opinions and ideas. This inclusive approach, combined with a gradual increase in management opportunities, has allowed staff to take on greater responsibility. While the school recognises that retention is influenced by various factors, it manages these transitions well by fostering a consistently positive and professional working environment.

The school remains deeply committed to prioritising excellent standards of teaching, learning, pupil progress, and wellbeing. Clear expectations and robust support systems are in place, ensuring these core areas remain at the heart of the school's mission. As a result, the high standards identified in the previous inspection have been successfully maintained and continue to underpin the school's daily operations.

Progress regarding marking and feedback is evident, with pockets of excellence observed where feedback is highly informative. In these instances, pupils have a clear understanding of their successes and their next steps for improvement. However, while the school has taken the previous recommendation into account, there remains further work to be done to ensure this high quality, informative approach is applied with full consistency across all phases and subjects within the school.

Recommendations:

Recommendations to address before the next inspection are to:

1. Strengthen the middle management structure by defining clear positions of responsibility and allocating time to ensure the sustained quality of teaching and learning as the school expands.
2. Embed the comprehensive use of data for target setting and to inform teaching across the school, with a particular focus on measuring and improving 'value added' at IGCSE.