

Material change inspection report

31 March and 1 April 2025

Merchant Taylors' Boys' School

Liverpool Road

Crosby

Liverpool

Merseyside

L23 0QP

Inspection outcome

The school has requested a material change request to merge with Merchant Taylors' Girls' School and to change from single-sex to co-education. The school has also requested that Merchant Taylors' Prep School be registered under the same DfE registration number. The request includes a proposed change in school premises, so that all senior school pupils are accommodated on a single school site, a change in the registered age-range to of pupils 4 to 18 under DfE number 343/6129 and to change the registered pupil capacity to 1350 as a result of merging the three schools.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR paragraphs 2, 2A, 3, and 4

1. The school's curriculum policy, plans and schemes of work meet the needs of the ages and aptitudes of all pupils from the early years to the sixth form. Pupils follow a broad range of subjects that give experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.
2. Leaders in the boys' and girls' schools have identified GCSE specifications that will be appropriate for co-educational classes. Leaders have made arrangements for pupils who are following GCSE courses in subjects where the syllabus and programmes of study are not yet fully aligned between the boys' and girls' schools to complete their course of study without disruption. This means that for the first year some subjects may include single-sex classes so that pupils can continue with their chosen course of study through to their examinations. Once these courses have been completed, pupils will be taught in co-educational classes.
3. The schools provide a wide range of co-curricular opportunities. Leaders successfully encourage high levels of pupil participation. Leaders ensure equality of access to the full range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
4. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at an early stage and supported effectively both in lessons and in additional sessions to support their learning and progress.
5. Leaders have reviewed the arrangements for, and content of, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), including relationship and sex education (RSE) in the context of co-educational classes in Year 7 to Year 11. Leaders recognise the need to continuously evaluate its effectiveness.
6. Teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons and suitable teaching methods. Teachers demonstrate a secure understanding of the pupils and their needs. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, make effective use of resources, and employ effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour.

7. Almost all staff already teach lessons in both the boys' and girls' school, and/or in the co-educational sixth form. Leaders promote professional discussion across the staff team to support the proposed change to co-education and ensure that staff are clear about the importance of promoting a positive culture of equality of opportunity across the school and ensuring high expectations for all pupils.
8. The two schools already share the same assessment framework to provide information about the progress of pupils throughout the school. Leaders make effective use of this information to ensure that pupils make good progress.
9. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

ISSR paragraph 5

10. The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance and furthers the pupils' personal development. Male and female pupils share lessons in the sixth form and the prep school is fully co-educational throughout.
11. Pupils from the boys' and girls' schools take part in almost all co-curricular activities alongside each other. Leaders actively promote respect and understanding across the school community.
12. Leaders ensure that teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Leaders ensure that pupils are presented with a balanced perspective when considering a range of views. In particular, leaders monitor schemes of work, documentation and lessons to ensure that teachers do not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010.
13. The school meets the Standard and is likely to continue to meet the Standard if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7 (a) and (b), 11, 12, 14, 16 (a) and (b)

14. Implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for pupils' needs. Safeguarding procedures are implemented appropriately to safeguard children who may be at risk of harm. Staff receive relevant training to ensure that their knowledge is up to date. Staff understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.
15. Safeguarding leaders in boys', girls' and prep schools already work together to share information as appropriate and address concerns. They have provided additional training to staff in preparation for a fully co-educational environment and an increase in the number of pupils on site.
16. Leaders follow robust protocols in identifying and addressing concerns relating to pupils' attendance.
17. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are clearly set out within the safeguarding policy.

18. Leaders have put in place effective software to monitor and filter the use of the internet. Records are regularly viewed by the safeguarding team and reviewed by the safeguarding governor.
19. Staff show appropriate awareness of the staff code of conduct and safeguarding procedures.
20. Staff use the school's procedures appropriately to report any low-level concerns about themselves or other staff. They are knowledgeable about statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) 2024. They know who to go to if they have a concern. They also know that they can make a referral to children's services if necessary.
21. Suitable risk assessment procedures are in place for determining where immediate action is required when issues arise, including referral to local agencies. The school has an effective understanding of the local guidance on reporting child-on-child abuse. Records are detailed and are kept confidential. Pupils receive early help to address risks and to help prevent issues escalating.
22. Staff with particular responsibilities monitor children in need effectively. Suitable communication is maintained with parents where appropriate. Staff are clear that they must always act in the best interests of the child.
23. The oversight by governors of safeguarding is appropriate and includes an annual review. Governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. There is regular contact between those with safeguarding responsibilities and a nominated governor to liaise regarding safeguarding arrangements at the school.
24. The training for the safeguarding team is up to date and in line with local requirements. Training is held in the school for teaching and non-teaching staff. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
25. The proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy. Records show that testing of electrical, water and other utilities is regularly undertaken. Staff are effectively trained in health and safety and deal promptly and appropriately with accidents if they occur, including through the reporting of serious accidents. Systematic records ensure trends are identified and steps taken to address health and safety issues promptly. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
26. The school has an effective fire risk prevention policy which includes the elimination or reduction of risks from dangerous substances. A fire risk assessment of all buildings has been undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Fire procedures are understood by, and training provided for, staff. Termly fire drills are carried out and recorded. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
27. Pupils are properly supervised by qualified and well-trained staff. Senior leaders maintain a visible presence throughout the school day. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
28. The risk assessment policy clearly describes the lines of responsibility and the approaches to be taken to identify and mitigate risk. There are appropriate assessments of risk for in-school activities, school visits, and for the needs of individual pupils both while in school and in the surrounding area, and appropriate action is taken to mitigate risks identified.

29. Leaders have reviewed the traffic arrangements at the beginning and end of the day in the context of the proposed increased numbers of pupils. The arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
30. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR paragraphs 18 to 21;

31. All the required checks on staff and governors are carried out and completed before they take up their posts. Checks for the boys', girls' and prep schools are already managed by a central team. The school does not employ supply staff. Contractors send the school up-to-date information on checks they have undertaken on their employees, and the school makes appropriate further checks when contractors arrive at the school to carry out work.
32. The school maintains correctly an accurate single central register of appointments which includes the dates on which all checks have been completed.
33. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraphs 22 to 29

34. Suitable toilet and changing facilities, showering facilities, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The school has planned to provide suitable facilities to accommodate the proposed increased numbers of female pupils being educated on the site from September.
35. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; and water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Leaders have planned the curriculum and re-ordered the use of rooms to ensure that all pupils have access to suitable recreation facilities, quiet areas and study spaces.
36. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

37. 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.
38. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

39. Governors maintain effective oversight of leaders' work to ensure the effective safeguarding of pupils and staff, the health and safety of the school site, and promote the wellbeing of pupils. Governors and leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school Standards are met consistently.
40. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils through strategic and operational planning including the proposed increase in numbers and the proposed increased number and age-range of female pupils on the Harrison site.
41. The school meets the Standards and is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Merchant Taylors' Boys' School
Department for Education number	343/6129
Registered charity number	1125485
Address	Merchant Taylors' Boys' School Liverpool Road Crosby Liverpool Merseyside L23 0QP
Phone number	0151 9283308
Email address	infomtbs@merchanttaylor.com
Website	www.merchanttaylor.com
Proprietor	Governors of Merchant Taylors School
Chair	Mr Philip Marshall KC
Headteacher	Mr Deiniol Williams
Age range	7 to 18
Number of pupils	459
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 May 2023

Information about the school

42. Merchant Taylors' Boys' School is in Crosby, on the outskirts of Liverpool. It is registered as a day school for male pupils. There is a separate girls' school registered for female pupils and prep school registered for both male and female pupils a short distance away. Sixth form pupils from the boys' and girls' schools are already taught in co-educational classes, primarily on the boys' ("Harrison") site.
43. The prep school includes an early years setting for 27 children which will be unaffected by the proposal to integrate the three schools under one DfE registration.
44. The school has identified 119 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
45. The school has identified five pupils for whom English is an additional language.
46. The school states that its aims are to provide a caring, nurturing and adaptable environment that is at the heart of the community. It seeks to prepare pupils for the changing world of education and work and to play a significant role in society. It aspires to foster a passion for learning, ensuring every pupil strives for excellence and reaches their potential in all aspects of their education.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the DfE to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

31 March to 1 April 2025

47. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for two days.

48. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site to look at the quality of premises and accommodation, plans for the re-ordering of accommodation in the context of increased numbers, provision for an increased number of female pupils on the site
- tour of lessons in the boys' school, including those with both male and female pupils
- tour of lessons in the prep school

- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with male and female pupils of a range of ages, and with staff
- scrutiny of information published on the school's website.

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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