



Material Change Inspection Report

St John's School, Leatherhead

June 2024

School's details

School	St John's School, Leatherhead			
DfE number	936 6070			
Registered charity number	312064			
Address	St John's School, Leatherhead Epsom Road Leatherhead Surrey KT22 8SP			
Telephone number	01372 373000			
Email address	pahead@stjohns.surrey.sch.uk			
Website	www.stjohnsleatherhead.co.uk			
Head	Mr Alex Tate			
Chair of governors	Mrs Lesley Moon			
Proprietor	The Governing Council of St John's School Foundation			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	854			
	Day pupils	831	Weekly Boarders	23
	Lower School	192	Upper School	408
	Sixth form	254		
Date of inspection	17 June 2024			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St John’s School, Leatherhead is an independent co-educational day and boarding school in Leatherhead, Surrey. It is owned and governed by the council of St John’s School Foundation. It comprises a lower school for pupils aged 11 to 13, a senior school for pupils aged 13 to 16 and a sixth form. The school is predominantly a day school with a small number of weekly boarders and a number of pupils who board on a fixed night or a few nights each week. Boarders are accommodated, with suitable segregation, on two floors of the main school building and in two separate houses.
- 1.2 The school has identified 381 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are three pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for seven pupils. The previous inspection was of focused compliance and educational quality and it took place in May 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.3 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school’s proposal to increase its capacity from 850 to 900. 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 school has not proposed an increase in its boarding capacity.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 5, 6, 7 and 8	Met
Part 3 paragraphs 11 (health and safety) and 12 (fire safety); NMS 9 and 10	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision) and 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9 and 20	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23 to 30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 4	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 14	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders; boarders' possessions; provision and preparation of food and drink; boarders' health and wellbeing [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 5, 6, 7 and 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 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

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 The school implements its safeguarding policy effectively. It provides appropriate support for the needs of all its pupils including boarders.
- 2.5 Pupils are confident to report any concerns which they have because staff listen to them with suitable care and respond appropriately. Pupils use many ways in which to report, including those which enable them to do so anonymously. That the response they receive is effective is confirmed in the systematic records of any safeguarding concerns, including those related to child-on-child abuse. These are used effectively to establish any patterns of behavioural incidents, including those of a sexualised nature. Senior leaders maintain suitable and regular contact with external agencies such as local authorities and the police, seek advice and make referrals appropriately and in a timely fashion.
- 2.6 Pupils are well educated about the risks associated with online behaviour; the school implements effective filtering and monitoring systems and manages pupils use of personal devices appropriately. Effective provision supports pupils' mental health needs and the school assesses the risks around vulnerable pupils with suitable care.
- 2.7 Safeguarding leaders are appropriately trained at the advanced level. They train all staff, including in the dangers of extremism, and provide effective induction for all new staff. Regular updates are also provided. Staff demonstrate effective understanding of safeguarding procedures and are well supported by the safeguarding team in promoting the welfare of pupils. They understand their code of conduct which emphasizes professional behaviour appropriately and say that they would use the whistleblowing procedure if necessary. They understand the procedures for reporting any concerns they have about colleagues or the head, including those which do not meet the harm threshold. A suitable log of these low-level concerns is kept.
- 2.8 Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding and are suitably trained. The designated safeguarding governor attends safeguarding meetings regularly and provides both support and challenge to senior safeguarding leaders. Policy and procedures are reviewed annually by the whole governing body and minutes show that detailed questioning takes place so that governors can fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- 2.9 In the boarding houses, weekly boarders' personal needs are catered for appropriately as are those for the large number of pupils who board occasionally. This includes effective medical provision. Suitable meals, snacks and drinking water are provided; boarders have appropriate places to store personal belongings and suitable laundry arrangements are in place.
- 2.10 Systems currently implemented provide effectively for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety and fire safety; safety of boarders; fire precautions and drills [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 11 and 12; NMS 9 and 10]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 There is a suitable health and safety policy in place which is effectively implemented across all aspects of school life. Responsibilities are clearly delineated and the safety of pupils, staff and visitors is given a sufficiently high priority. Documentation is thorough and shows that all required checks on infrastructure are regularly carried out in a timely fashion. Monitoring of health and safety is carried out effectively. Traffic around the site is well managed to ensure separation of pedestrians from vehicles and the school has suitable procedures in place to limit access by vehicles. New staff receive appropriate induction in health and safety and all staff receive regular updates and training according to their roles. Effective records of training are kept centrally.
- 2.13 Suitable fire infrastructure is in place across all areas of the school site, including in the boarding houses. Records show that regular checks are carried out to ensure its effectiveness. Fire drills are regularly undertaken during the day, and at night in boarding houses, and suitable records are kept. The school has responded appropriately to any recommendations in the recent external fire risk assessment.
- 2.14 Systems currently implemented provide effectively for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils; risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 14 and 16; NMS 9 and 20]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 Pupils are effectively supervised during the school day due to the effective implementation of age-appropriate staff rotas. Effective supervision is also in place in the boarding houses during the evenings and overnight. Boarders confirm that they feel safe and secure in the boarding environment. The school reviews its supervision arrangements effectively following any incidents.
- 2.17 The school has an effective approach to the identification and management of risk. There is a suitable risk assessment policy which is implemented effectively. This is demonstrated in suitable risk assessments for different departments, school buildings, the school site and for trips and visits. These are monitored and reviewed by senior leaders to ensure their suitability. Effective risk assessments are also in place for any vulnerable pupils and these provide a framework to ensure that ongoing welfare needs are met. The school has carefully considered any risks associated with the proposed increase in numbers.
- 2.18 Systems currently implemented provide effectively for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 The school implements its recruitment policy effectively so that all required checks on staff and proprietors are completed before appointment. The checks are accurately recorded on the single central record of appointments. The school does not currently employ supply staff.
- 2.21 Systems currently implemented provide effectively for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 The premises and accommodation provided by the school are suitable and sufficient for the needs of the pupils. Classrooms are spacious and well furnished. Facilities provided in specialist classrooms are appropriate for the proposed increase in numbers of pupils. The school is well maintained through a rolling programme of regular refurbishment. Lighting and acoustic conditions are suitable.
- 2.24 There are sufficient toilets, washing facilities and changing accommodation, and medical accommodation, for all pupils, including boarders. Pupils have access to drinking water and the large site provides sufficient space for physical education and recreation.
- 2.25 Boarding accommodation is spacious, clean and well maintained.
- 2.26 Current provision is likely to be effective for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.27 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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 14]

- 2.28 The school meets the standards.
- 2.29 School leaders and governors implement an effective complaints procedure and maintain an appropriate and detailed log of formal complaints which also records actions taken in response to complaints whether or not they are upheld.
- 2.30 Systems currently implemented provide effectively for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

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

- 2.31 The school meets the standards.
- 2.32 Senior leaders monitor safeguarding and welfare arrangements appropriately. Governors provide effective oversight of the standards, including those for boarding. Where any concerns are raised with regard to leadership and governance of the school, governors review these appropriately and take effective action for the future where necessary. Leaders, including those in boarding, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively; they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
- 2.33 The school has planned with suitable care for the proposed increase in pupil numbers and current arrangements are effective for the proposed increase in capacity.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the school's request to increase its capacity from 850 to 900 pupils be granted. Suitable arrangements are in place to cater for the increased capacity.

4. Summary of evidence

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