



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report  
For Schools with Residential Provision**

**St John's School, Sidmouth**

**February 2023**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	St John's School			
<b>DfE number</b>	878/6018			
<b>Address</b>	St John's School Broadway Sidmouth Devon EX10 8RG			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01395 513984			
<b>Email address</b>	contact.stjohns@iesmail.com			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Bryan Kane			
<b>Chair of Proprietors</b>	Dr Jorge Segovia			
<b>Proprietor</b>	International Education Systems Limited			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 16			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	176			
	<b>Day pupils</b>	163	<b>Boarders</b>	13
	<b>EYFS</b>	37	<b>Juniors</b>	65
	<b>Seniors</b>	74		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1 to 2 February 2023			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 St John's School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. It is owned by International Education Systems Ltd (IES), and two company directors serve as governors of the school, assisted by group officers. Since the previous inspection, the school has refurbished its boarding accommodation for pupils. The current head took up his position in September 2021.
- 1.2 The school comprises an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children in the Nursery and Reception class, the junior school for pupils in Years 1 to 6, and the senior school for pupils in Years 7 to 11. There is one boarding house with separate accommodation for male and female pupils.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a secure and outward-looking environment within which pupils can develop skills of intellectual enquiry, problem solving, cultural empathy and leadership. It intends that each pupil will be supported to build upon previous learning and demonstrate this in ways which reflect personal success. The objective is that, based upon what they have learnt, pupils will be ready to take responsible action in the next phase of their lives.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Day pupils come from professional and business families in East Devon. Boarding pupils mainly come from other IES and SEK Educational Group schools throughout the world. Nationally standardised data indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. There are 23 pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia. Of these, 17 receive extra support within the school. There are 16 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 14 receive additional support for their English. There is one pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Twenty-six pupils identified as more able in particular areas are provided with extension activities both within and beyond the curriculum.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 In the EYFS and junior school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2022, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.9 Good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, and provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.11 Arrangements are not always made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. The proprietor does not oversee safeguarding effectively through undertaking specific training in safeguarding to discharge their responsibilities as required by statutory guidance and conducting the required annual review of policies and procedures.

- 2.12 Leaders do not always ensure that all checks on staff required by current statutory guidance are carried out before staff commence work at the school. Barred list checks and checks for prohibition from teaching and prohibition from management have not always been completed on members of staff before they start employment, where these are required. In addition the school has not always ensured that satisfactory references are received for staff before they begin work. The school has not always put in place appropriate additional safeguards should an enhanced criminal record certificate be delayed.
- 2.13 The school also does not implement an effective fire safety policy through completing actions required in a fire risk assessment in a timely manner.
- 2.14 The standards on safeguarding, fire precautions and drills and staff recruitment and checks on other adults are not met and represent a failure to safeguard boarders.
- 2.15 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–11 and 13–16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 3, 5–7, 11–12, 15–16, and 20 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding], 8 [safeguarding of boarders] and 12 [fire safety], and NMS 8 [safeguarding of boarders], 10 [fire precautions and drills] and 19 [staff recruitment and checks on other adults] are not met.**

### Action point 1

**The proprietor must oversee safeguarding effectively, including through undertaking specific training in safeguarding and conducting a suitable annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 8.1; EYFS 3.7].**

### Action point 2

**The school must ensure that all checks on staff required by current statutory guidance, including barred list checks and, where relevant, prohibition from teaching and prohibition from management checks, are carried out before staff commence work at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b); NMS 8.1 and 19.1; EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].**

### Action point 3

**The school must ensure that it completes actions required by a fire risk assessment in a timely manner [paragraph 12; NMS 10.1 and 10.2; EYFS 3.56].**

## PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.16 The school does not always make appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors and a register is not kept as required. In particular, the school does not always check the identity, right to work in the United Kingdom or, where appropriate, qualifications before staff commence working at the school.
- 2.17 The school has not obtained an enhanced criminal record certificate for members of the proprietorial board or completed the required checks for prohibition from management, identity, right to work in the United Kingdom, or checks for those who have lived or worked overseas. In addition, the register does not record the date upon which or whether these checks have taken place.
- 2.18 Appropriate checks on supply staff are made as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraph 19 is met, but those in paragraphs 18 [members of staff], 20 [proprietors] and 21 [single central register of appointments], and NMS 19 [staff recruitment and checks on other adults] are not met.**

#### Action point 4

The school must ensure that checks on identity, the right to work in the United Kingdom, and, where appropriate, qualifications are in place before staff commence working at the school [paragraph 18(2)(c)(iv) and 18 (3); NMS 19.1; EYFS 3.9].

#### Action point 5

The school must ensure that checks for prohibition from management, enhanced criminal record and for the right to work in the United Kingdom, and checks for those who have lived or worked overseas are undertaken upon members of the proprietorial board as soon as reasonably practicable after appointment [paragraph 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b)(i), (ii) and (iii); NMS 19.1; EYFS 3.9].

#### Action point 6

The school must ensure that the register records the date upon which, or whether, checks upon members of the proprietorial board have been made [paragraphs 21(1), 21(6), 21(7)(a) and (b); NMS 19.1; EYFS 3.12].

### PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.20 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.21 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4 and 7 are met.**

### PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.22 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.23 **The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

### PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.24 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.



**2.25 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.26 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Leadership and management of boarding does not ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

2.27 The proprietor does not ensure appropriate oversight of safeguarding and safeguarding of boarding, effective management of fire safety and appropriate completion of recruitment checks in accordance with current statutory guidance. As a consequence, the standard on the management and development of boarding is also not met.

**2.28 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 2 are not met.**

### **Action point 7**

**The proprietor must ensure that those involved in the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraphs 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 – 2.8].**

### 3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor and safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

#### Inspectors

Mr Michael Clennett	Reporting inspector
Mrs Olivera Raraty	Compliance team inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Andrew Gordon-Brown	Team inspector for boarding (Headmaster, HMC school)