



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Bath Academy

February 2020



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School's Details

College	Bath Academy			
DfE number	800/6015			
Address	Bath Academy 27 Queen Square Bath Somerset BA1 2HX			
Telephone number	01225 334577			
Email address	info@bathacademy.co.uk			
Principal	Mr Tim Naylor			
Chairman of directors	Mr David Game			
Age range	14 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	85			
	Day pupils	74	Boarders	11
	Seniors	9	Sixth Form	76
Inspection dates	4 to 6 February 2020			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Founded in 1995, Bath Academy is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 14 and 19 years. The school is owned by Bath Academy Ltd and governance is provided by the directors.
- 1.2 Located in two Georgian buildings in Bath city centre, the school is a tutorial college which prepares pupils for university entrance through A levels or the University Foundation Programme and other qualifications. The school accommodates some boarding pupils in a boarding house and others in homestays with local families.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, an additional building has been acquired to accommodate further classrooms and a café.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to create a safe, inclusive and caring environment where pupils from around the world are taught in small groups, and have their individual needs taken into account, so that they can achieve well. It endeavours to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and self-esteem so that they are well-prepared for adult life.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Most pupils come from professional and business families from Bath, with around one in three pupils coming from overseas. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability profile of the school is broadly average with a fairly wide range of abilities represented. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and anxiety disorder, all of whom receive specialist support. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 17 pupils, eight of whom receive additional support for their English. The school aims to challenge the most able pupils through individualised teaching and enrichment.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection 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 in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2017 to 2019 have been in line with the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.5 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. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.6 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; 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.
- 2.8 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 and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed. The school makes appropriate arrangements to provide long-term lodgings for some boarders.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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. They also include 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.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.16 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.
- 2.17 The standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.18 The proprietor ensures 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.19 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- Pupils of all abilities make good, and sometimes excellent progress from their varied starting points.
 - Pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes towards their learning and have an intrinsic motivation to develop their own study skills.
 - Pupils achieve well in lessons but there are limited opportunities for pupils to strengthen their achievement beyond the classroom.
 - Pupils have good information communication technology (ICT) skills but these are not applied consistently across the curriculum.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- Pupils develop self-confidence and self-esteem rapidly because they receive individual attention in the school's highly supportive environment.
 - Pupils are naturally inclusive, showing a deep respect for, and appreciation of, those who have different backgrounds or beliefs from their own.
 - Pupils enjoy working collaboratively and show commitment to supporting one another.
 - The pupils' strong moral and social development is reflected in a community which is built on kindness and mutual respect.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
- Enable pupils to experience greater opportunities for involvement in activities beyond the classroom and outside examination requirements.
 - Enable pupils to develop and use their ICT skills to a higher level by ensuring that current best practice is widely disseminated.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils join the school with a wide range of abilities. In the years 2017 to 2019, results at A level have been in line with the national average for maintained schools. In 2019, 22% of A-level grades were awarded A or A* and the average grade improvement for re-sit pupils was two grades per subject. In 2019, 73% of GCSE and IGCSE grades were awarded grades nine to four, or equivalent; however as only a small number of pupils are entered for GCSE, the results cannot be compared with the national average for maintained schools. A very large majority of pupils who applied for university in 2019 achieved entry to their first choice university. Pupils are good at monitoring their own progress and this has been facilitated by the introduction by leadership of regular assessments to evaluate progress and to set targets. Boarding pupils said that the peer support they receive in the boarding house helps them to make progress. Lesson observations, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils indicate that during their time at the school all groups of pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, have made rapid progress. This is as a result of the tailored support, and encouragement to fulfil their potential, that all pupils receive, thus fulfilling the aim of the school to take into account the individual needs of the pupils so that they can achieve well.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning and work with great determination. In the responses to the inspection questionnaires, a very small minority of pupils disagreed that the school helps them to become independent. During the inspection it was observed that, although much of the learning was led by teachers, pupils were very good at taking responsibility for their own progress and success. For example, pupils organise their own revision study groups and take responsibility for completing assessments so that they can learn from feedback and make further progress. In many lessons observed, pupils collaborated willingly and freely, engaging with one another and their teachers. This was seen in an AS-level history lesson where pupils built on one another's knowledge as they discussed sources from differing points of view. Boarders praise the collaborative nature of working together, for example during study sessions before breakfast.
- 3.7 Pupils display strong numerical skills and apply their good mathematical knowledge effectively to other areas of learning. Their skills are well-developed as they have frequent opportunities to put them into practice to enhance their learning and investigations. Subjects such as biology, business studies, chemistry, psychology, physics and sociology contribute strongly to the development of these skills. In an A-level chemistry lesson, pupils balanced and manipulated chemical equations with confidence, while in A-level biology work pupils used graphs successfully to determine the relationship between absorbance and ethanol concentration. Some pupils demonstrate a high level of competency in ICT, as seen in the use of photo-editing software and animated presentations. In an A-level geography lesson, pupils showed good ICT skills as they collated Australian export data and in a mathematics lesson pupils used their devices effectively to access and solve problems. Pupils say that they use ICT mainly for note taking and research purposes, however, there is an inconsistency in the pupils' application of ICT across all curriculum areas.
- 3.8 Pupils' oral communication and listening skills are excellent. They listen carefully to one another and contribute willingly to discussions both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils have many opportunities to practise these skills through discussion in tutorial-style lessons, which are facilitated by governance and leadership's commitment to the individual needs of pupils. Excellent discussion skills were demonstrated in an A-level government and politics lesson, as pupils talked about styles of leadership, and in an A-level history lesson where pupils articulated their views with great clarity when debating the possibility of Cromwell being the architect of the Reformation. Good reading skills were evident in an AS history lesson as pupils analysed a primary source which related to the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. Pupils also have well-developed writing skills as seen through, for example, well-written essays in English and history and good note-taking in biology. Pupils with EAL make rapid progress with their English speaking and writing skills, and by the end of their course they have mastered highly technical language. It is notable throughout the school that pupils with SEND, who experience difficulties with communication, have the confidence to contribute to discussions as they are encouraged and supported by their peers.
- 3.9 Pupils display well-developed knowledge, skills and understanding across the range of subjects they study. This is as a result of much well-prepared teaching coupled with the vision of leadership and governance to provide pupils with a bespoke curriculum. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the range of subjects is suitable for their child. In lessons, pupils were seen to apply previous knowledge effectively to new concepts. For example, under the careful guidance of their teachers, pupils developed a good understanding of the two-process model relating learnt behaviour and phobias, demonstrated improving linguistic skills as they formulated compound sentences and displayed good mathematical understanding as they grappled with alternative methods of integration.

- 3.10 Pupils' study skills are well-developed. Throughout the school, pupils use these skills very effectively because they are encouraged to extend their understanding by learning through open questions and appropriate tasks. Their strong ability to analyse, hypothesise and synthesise is evident through subject-specific opportunities. For example, in an A-level biology lesson, pupils demonstrated some good higher-level thinking skills as they hypothesised about the future impact of global warming, while in an A-level geography lesson pupils demonstrated a strong ability to synthesise their thoughts as they analysed data about the steel trade between Australia and China, linking it to recent trade disputes and World Trade Organisation rules.
- 3.11 Pupils regularly win national prizes which recognise their academic successes and they compete in a national general knowledge competition organised between association schools. Where pupils excel in activities outside the school, such as netball, orienteering and sailing, the school encourages and facilitates their participation. In response to the questionnaires, a few parents disagreed that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Boarders benefit from a programme of evening and weekend activities which include basketball, water sports and theatre trips. However, such opportunities across the school are not always sufficiently developed to enable all pupils to have the chance to show achievement beyond the classroom.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.13 Throughout their time at the school, pupils develop high levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils displayed excellent self-confidence when attempting challenging questions using a range of calculus techniques, and in a psychology lesson, pupils demonstrated good self-knowledge as they evaluated their arguments relating behavioural approaches to examinations and phobias. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to improve their own learning. This is because feedback from teachers, both in lessons and in their assessments, enables pupils to reflect on their learning and build upon their knowledge. In discussion with inspectors, boarders highlighted how the nature of boarding allowed them to learn skills of self-discipline, for example the individual management of their time, including doing their own laundry. Pupils cite the positivity of the staff and the culture in the school of warmth and acceptance as the reason behind the strong growth in their self-esteem.
- 3.14 Pupils have well-developed social skills and engage proactively in conversation with teachers, peers and visitors. They show concern for each other and readily welcome new pupils to the school, ensuring that they feel a part of the community. The boarding house creates an environment which successfully promotes social living, and all boarders who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they generally get on well with one another in the house. Pupils are good at working collaboratively to benefit others, with pupils supporting one another in their learning. The supportive environment enables pupils with SEND to gain social skills and form successful relationships with their peers.
- 3.15 Pupils show a good awareness of the importance of non-material aspects of life and are able to reflect well on the spiritual dimension. For example, in an A-level English lesson pupils showed a good level of spirituality when analysing the emotions and empathy displayed in *The Kite Runner*. In discussions with inspectors, pupils spoke of how they have gained a greater understanding of the spiritual aspects of life through multi-faith discussions with their peers. This is particularly evident in the boarding house where pupils from a range of cultures reflect upon ways of expressing their spirituality. Pupils' strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life is evident in the high quality of art on display in the school and through their expression of the sense of calmness they feel when relaxing in the café garden.

- 3.16 Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and the need to stay physically and mentally healthy. They are aware of the benefits of a wholesome diet and appreciate the home-cooked food available in the boarding house and in the café. Pupils have a clear awareness of mental and emotional well-being. During discussions, pupils described how they had taken up physical exercise and engaged in mindfulness sessions to improve their mental health. Individual tutors and boarding staff are highly effective in communicating and identifying any pupils who might be at risk, and pupils strongly appreciate the personalised support that they receive from them. Pupils recognise the importance of staying physically healthy and boarders enjoy the opportunity to play basketball or to be a part of the running group. However, there are limited opportunities available for sixth form day pupils to be involved in physical activities.
- 3.17 Pupils have a strong moral awareness and appreciate the opportunity to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are very thoughtful and are keen to explore moral issues, as seen in an English language lesson where pupils engaged in reflective discussions about outcomes for criminals in the British legal system. In discussions with inspectors, pupils highlighted that behaviour in the school is good as there is a culture of warmth and mutual respect between pupils and their teachers.
- 3.18 Pupils are very supportive of their peers and value the school community. For example, pupils who are competent users of ICT willingly help those with less experience to improve their skills and understanding, and boarders support one another with academic work and by discussing issues which will benefit the house community. Pupils contribute to charitable initiatives to support the local community, but enterprises initiated without adult support are limited.
- 3.19 Pupils have a good understanding of how the decisions they make affect their future success and are reflective of their position in their own educational paths. For example, many of the pupils have opted to strengthen their examination results through further study to enable them to pursue the university education of their choice. In discussions with inspectors, pupils said that they are given the independence and freedom to make informed decisions about their future career options and their future studies, and are confident in their ability to make the right decision as a result of advice and support they receive from their teachers and personal tutors.
- 3.20 Pupils demonstrate an excellent level of respect for one another, regardless of any perceived difference. This was evident during observations of, and in discussions with, different groups of pupils. In the questionnaires, all parents and a very large majority of pupils agreed that the school actively promotes tolerance and respect for others. Pupils showed strong empathy in their AS-level philosophy work, when they realised that a questionnaire to discover links between material deprivation and achievement could be a sensitive issue. The multi-cultural nature of the boarding house creates an atmosphere which strongly promotes cross-cultural understanding. Boarders spoke to inspectors about the discussions they have with each other about cultural differences and assimilation into British society, for example gaining an understanding of the British attitude towards 'small talk'. Pupils appreciate others from different backgrounds from their own, relishing opportunities to learn about and understand different cultures. This was seen in a psychology lesson where pupils rapidly improved their understanding of attitudes within different cultures towards the expression of negative emotions. Governance, leadership and all staff successfully promote a highly tolerant ethos and the school very successfully meets its aim to provide an inclusive education to an international community within a safe and caring environment.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor. Inspectors visited the boarding house and held discussions with homestay hosts. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sue Clarke	Reporting inspector
Mr Neil Cufley	Compliance team inspector (Director of operations, HMC, IAPS and ISBA school)
Mr James Jones	Boarding team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Michael Taylor	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)