



Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

St. John's School, Sidmouth

September 2023

School's details

School	St John's School			
DfE number	878/6018			
Address	St John's School Broadway Sidmouth Devon EX10 8RG			
Telephone number	01395 513984			
Email address	contact.stjohns@iesmail.com			
Headteacher	Mr Bryan Kane			
Chair of Proprietors	Dr Jorge Segovia			
Proprietor	International Education Systems Limited			
Age range	2 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	188			
	Day pupils	159	Boarders	29
	EYFS	33	Juniors	71
	Seniors	84		
Inspection date	14 September 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St John's School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school situated in Sidmouth in Devon. It is owned by International Education Systems Ltd (IES), and two company directors act as governors of the school, assisted by group officers. 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. Twenty-eight pupils require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 32 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in February 2023.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection on 1 to 2 February 2023. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which are the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 10	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors) NMS 19	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 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's safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively to ensure the welfare of pupils, including boarders and children in the EYFS. There is a positive culture of safeguarding across all aspects of school life. Discussions with both staff and pupils confirm that leaders have established an open culture of safeguarding to which all can contribute and where all concerns are listened to and acted upon swiftly. Pupils confirmed that they can approach any member of staff if they are worried, knowing that they will receive a response and that appropriate action will be taken to support them. Records of safeguarding confirm that this happens in practice. Matters such as online safety, including the monitoring and filtering of technology, are handled effectively by the school and overseen appropriately by the designated safeguarding lead and proprietors. Pupils confirmed that the school provides clear guidance to help them to keep safe online.
- 2.5 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has a secure oversight of safeguarding arrangements and ensures that the safeguarding team keeps detailed confidential records of any concerns. These confirm that senior leaders work within locally agreed inter-agency procedures and that any referrals of safeguarding concerns are made to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner.
- 2.6 There is suitably rigorous oversight of the school's safer recruitment procedures. Scrutiny of records confirms that all required checks, including those against the barred list, and prohibition from teaching and from management are now completed on new appointments in a timely manner, before the person starts work. The designated governor for safeguarding ensures that an annual review of the school's safeguarding arrangements is carried out and shared with the governing board. The review is sufficiently detailed to meet local safeguarding partnership requirements.
- 2.7 All staff, including leaders, governors and those with specific safeguarding responsibility, are trained appropriately in safeguarding. Staff show confident understanding of the training they receive, including that regarding signs of abuse, child-on-child abuse and also areas such as mental health, sexual violence and harassment. Regular updates to training supplement the ongoing annual training received by all staff, and appropriate induction for new staff. These are supported by assessments and quizzes to ensure a sufficient audit of safeguarding understanding. Staff have a confident understanding of the process for referral should there be any concerns. They understand the school's code of conduct for staff and the whistleblowing policy. They know how to contact children's services direct, should the need arise.
- 2.8 There is an appropriate Prevent strategy in place which is suitably implemented.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 10]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.

- 2.10 Suitable arrangements are made to prevent and tackle fire in the school. There is a sufficient number of suitably trained staff. Regular maintenance and testing of fire-fighting equipment and installations ensure that these are fit for purpose. Fire exits are clearly signed and free of obstructions. A suitable fire risk assessment has been undertaken and any deficiencies have since been assiduously addressed without delay. Staff, pupils and scrutiny of records confirm that regular fire drills take place.

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

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 The school now has a secure approach to the safer recruitment of staff. This is robustly monitored by leaders and the proprietor. All appropriate checks, including those on identity, the right to work in the United Kingdom, and, where appropriate, qualifications are now in place before staff commence working at the school. The school now carries out the required checks on proprietors. Checks are accurately recorded on the single central register of appointments, including the dates on which they were made. The school maintains appropriate records of the evidence used to inform recruitment decisions.

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

- 2.13 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.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 The school's leadership and management now demonstrate the required skills and knowledge to ensure that all standards are met consistently. They have ensured that the action plan required following the previous inspection has been fully implemented. Leaders take appropriate action, supported by effective proprietorial oversight and challenge. They apply these skills and knowledge effectively to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Summary of evidence

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