

# St Albans Independent College

69 London Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1LN

**Inspection date**

12 January 2023

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraph 2(1)–2(1)(b)(i)*

- This standard was not met at the inspection in March 2022 because leaders did not have a strategic overview of the curriculum. Some subjects were narrowly focused on exams. Leaders did not take the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) into account as part of the school’s curriculum policy or when planning the curriculum.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in October 2022, it was found that the school intended to write new curriculum policies and documents, but there was no plan as to how leaders intended to train staff to undertake this work.
- Leaders have rewritten curriculum policies to take account the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. They have undertaken training for staff on how to adapt the curriculum. They have begun to review the content taught in each subject, but this process is at an early stage.
- Leaders intend that each subject will provide pupils with opportunities to engage with the local community, develop pupils’ well-being and consider how each subject prepares pupils for their future. Leaders do not know yet how these things will be done in each subject.
- This standard is not yet met.

#### *Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(f)*

- This standard was not met at the inspection in March 2022 as leaders had not consulted with parents and carers about the relationships and sex education (RSE) policy.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in October 2022, it was found that leaders had clear plans as to how to undertake this consultation.
- Leaders have now consulted with parents both about the RSE policy and the content of the curriculum.

- This standard is now met.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a)—3(d)*

- This standard was not met at the inspection in March 2022 because not all teachers were confident about how to support pupils, particularly those with SEND. Leaders had not provided staff with the information they needed to support pupils.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in October 2022, it was found that the school proposed to hold review meetings with teachers to help them understand pupil attainment. However, the action plan did not identify how teachers' knowledge about how to support pupils with SEND would be improved.
- The current action plan is focused more closely on pupils with SEND. Staff have had training about how to support these pupils. Leaders are starting to work with staff to improve their knowledge about how to adapt learning and support for individual pupils. Teachers are now clear about how to find the information they need about pupils.
- Plans for how staff support pupils with SEND across the curriculum are still in the early stages of development. Leaders know that the provision for pupils with SEND is still variable and, although they planned to, leaders have not yet worked with individual teachers to improve this work. Information used by teachers does not make it clear how pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans are being supported to meet their individual targets.
- This standard is not yet met.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraph 7–7(b)*

- At the inspection in March 2022, this standard was not met because procedures for safeguarding pupils were weak. Staff were unclear on how to report concerns. Safeguarding records were not thorough.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in October 2022, the proprietor proposed to strengthen the safeguarding team, provide staff with further safeguarding training and arrange for an independent review of safeguarding to be carried out. However, the action plan did not state how the school's safeguarding processes would be monitored going forwards.
- Staff have received additional safeguarding training. They are now clear about how to report concerns and the signs they should be aware of to indicate that a pupil may need additional support.
- Staff and pupils know which staff are responsible for safeguarding. However, the proprietor has not yet been successful in enhancing the school's safeguarding team. Some members of the team have not yet had sufficient training.
- The system for recording safeguarding is now more detailed. However, it still does not indicate clearly when staff have dealt with concerns. Leaders are not able to check if colleagues in the safeguarding team have followed through on the actions that are needed. Meetings of the safeguarding team do not happen as often as leaders intend.

- The school's safeguarding policy is now based on a template provided by the local authority and includes details specific to the school. It is up to date and reflects national guidance. The policy is available to parents on the school's website.
- The school continues to meet all the requirements for checks on adults who work in the school.
- Overall, this standard is not yet met.

*Paragraph 9, 9(b), 9(c)*

- At the inspection in March 2022, this standard was not met because there was no consistent system for logging behaviour incidents. Staff did not have a clear view of concerns about pupils' behaviour over time.
- In the action plan evaluation in October 2022, the proprietor proposed to record incidents of pupils' poor behaviour on the school's database systems, but the plan did not state how leaders would use this information to identify patterns over time.
- The current action plan is clear about how leaders and other staff will use the information they collect about pupils' behaviour. Staff have had training about different types of behaviour, and they know how to record incidents correctly. There is one system in place for recording misbehaviour.
- Leaders have collated and reviewed the information regarding misbehaviour appropriately.
- This standard is now met.

*Paragraph 15*

- At the inspection in March 2022, this standard was not met as the admission and attendance register was not maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.
- In the action plan evaluation in October 2022, the proprietor proposed to register pupils twice a day, but it was not clear how this information would be monitored.
- The attendance register is now compliant with statutory requirements. Leaders use this information to check that pupils are safe.
- This standard is now met.

*Paragraph 16, 16(b)*

- At the inspection in March 2022, this standard was not met as there were no appropriate risk assessments in place. This led to pupils being exposed to unnecessary risk.
- In the action plan evaluation in October 2022, it was not clear how leaders would ensure that there were appropriate risk assessments in place.
- Leaders have not ensured that there are appropriate risk assessments in place. Current risk assessments are too generic for a range of activities. They do not reflect the specific risks of the school's location, its building or its pupils.
- This standard is not yet met.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(b)*

- At the inspection in March 2022, this standard was not met because there were no suitable rooms to cater for the medical treatment of pupils.
- In the action plan evaluation in October 2022, it was clear that the proprietor understood the changes that were needed to the school buildings.
- On both of the school's sites, there is now a medical room with washing facilities and a folding bed. Both medical rooms are close to toilet facilities.
- This standard is now met.

## Part 6. Provision of information

### *Paragraph 32, 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(3) to 32(3)(b)*

- At the inspection in March 2022, this standard was not met as leaders did not provide parents with information about the school's policies for admissions, behaviour and exclusions. There was no information available about how pupils with EHC plans or pupils who speak English as an additional language would be supported.
- In the action plan evaluation in October 2022, it was clear that the proprietor had appropriate plans to provide this information. It was noted that it did not identify how often this would be reviewed.
- There are now clear policies available on the school's website for admissions, behaviour, exclusions, support for pupils with SEND and for those pupils who speak English as an additional language. These policies have clear review dates identified.
- There is an appropriate policy for safeguarding available to parents on the school's website.
- This standard is now met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)*

- This standard was not met at the inspection in March 2022. Leaders had not ensured that the school consistently met the independent school standards. There were unmet standards relating to the quality of education, the welfare and safety of pupils, premises and accommodation and the provision of information.
- In the evaluation of the action plan in October 2022, the action plan was judged to not be fit for purpose. It was not precise enough on what actions would take place and when.
- The school now has an action plan that is fit for purpose. Leaders clearly identify which actions are to be undertaken and by whom. Leaders do not always check carefully enough whether tasks have been completed successfully.
- The proprietor is not yet ensuring that the independent school standards are met consistently and securely over time.

- Pupils' safeguarding records and the school's risk assessments are not rigorous. Leaders do not check consistently that safeguarding concerns have been dealt with appropriately.
- There are warm relationships between pupils and the adults responsible. Pupils spoke about how they are 'free to be themselves' and how they value the nurturing but highly focused teaching. Pupils benefit from a wide extra-curricular offer, including regular charity work.
- This standard remains unmet.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	134087
DfE registration number	919/6243
Inspection number	10261578

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	58
Proprietor	Assim Jemal
Principal	Assim Jemal
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,600 to £53,279
Telephone number	01727 842348
Website	<a href="http://www.stalbanscollege.co.uk">www.stalbanscollege.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@stalbanscollege.co.uk">office@stalbanscollege.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	15 to 17 March 2022

## Information about this school

- The school has two sites. One site is at the school's registered site. The other is at 19 Victoria Street, St Albans AL1 3JJ.
- The school provides GCSE and A-level courses.
- The majority of students are in key stage 5 and study A levels. These are provided as two-year, one-year, AS, A2 and retake courses.
- In key stage 4, pupils study GCSE courses full time, over two years.
- Pupils learn in small classes of between one and seven pupils.

- More than half of the pupils in the school have SEND.
- The proprietor of the school is also one of the school's principals.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.



## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspector spoke to the proprietor, the co-principal and other senior leaders. She spoke to a range of staff. The inspector spoke with pupils during lessons and at recreation times.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of record-keeping, including attendance and behaviour. She looked at curriculum plans with leaders. The inspector looked at plans for supporting pupils with SEND.
- The inspector checked the single central record and a range of safeguarding records.

## Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time; and
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;

- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

## **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
  - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools, and
  - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
  - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
  - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
  - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.

### **Part 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph 32(3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–

- 32(3)(a) particulars of the school’s policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions; and
- 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023