

St Albans Independent College

69 London Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1LN

Inspection date

14 September 2023

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)–2(1)(b)(i)

- This independent school standard (the standard) was not met at the inspection in March 2022 because the curriculum was too narrow. Leaders did not ensure that pupils had opportunities to learn beyond the examination specifications. Leaders also did not take into consideration the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) when planning the curriculum.
- In the action plan in October 2022, leaders included plans to write new curriculum policies and documents. The evaluation of leaders' action plan found that leaders needed to clarify the intended impact of developments on the quality of education for pupils with SEND.
- The inspection in January 2023 found that leaders had started to review the curriculum plans in each subject. Since then, leaders continued their work to positive effect. Leaders need to continue the work started to clarify in curriculum plans exactly what knowledge they expect pupils to learn.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a)–3(d)

- This standard was not met at the inspection in March 2022 because not all teachers supported pupils with SEND effectively. This is because leaders had not provided staff with the information and guidance, they needed to plan effective learning opportunities for these pupils.
- The evaluation of the action plan in October 2022 found that leaders needed to identify how teachers would improve their knowledge about how to support pupils with SEND. Since then, leaders have built a new approach to inform and guide staff about pupils' needs. This is working well. Leaders have also trained staff about how best to support pupils with SEND. Teachers use leaders' information and guidance and provide what leaders expect for these pupils.
- This standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b)

- During the standard inspection in March 2022, this standard was not met because staff did not know how to report safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding records were also not well maintained.
- The evaluation of the action plan in October 2022 found that the proprietor planned to add more staff to the safeguarding team and provide staff safeguarding training. The action plan did not include how leaders would monitor safeguarding procedures.
- The school's safeguarding policy is fit for purpose. It is available to parents on the school's website.
- Staff have been trained in safeguarding. They are vigilant to signs of potential harm and know what to do when concerns arise. Leaders monitor safeguarding practices and ensure that staff follow the school's policy and procedures.
- Leaders have in place a new and effective approach to recording and communicating safeguarding information. Safeguarding records are well kept, detailing vital information about vulnerable pupils. Staff are well informed about the needs of vulnerable pupils and act on the information they receive.

Paragraphs 16, 16(b)

- In March 2022, inspectors found that there were no appropriate risk assessments in place.
- In October 2022, leaders' action plan did not clearly outline how leaders would ensure the school puts in place appropriate risk assessments.
- Leaders have worked with an external adviser to improve the school's risk assessments. Leaders have identified risks and put suitable measures in place to reduce them. Leaders have also improved their approach to writing risk assessments. Leaders continue to update the written risk assessments so that all documents and actions match leaders' improved approach.
- This standard is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- In March 2022, inspectors found that leaders had not ensured that the school consistently met the standards. Standards were not met for the quality of education, the welfare and safety of pupils, premises and accommodation and the provision of information.
- The evaluation of the action plan in October 2022 was judged as not being fit for purpose. This was because leaders were not sufficiently precise about the steps they would take to improve the school.
- In May 2022, leaders' action plan was evaluated as being acceptable though with modifications needed.
- In January 2023, the inspector found that the school continued to have unmet standards. Leaders improved aspects of the school but had not yet completed the work

needed to meet all of the standards.

- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor increased the size of the leadership team and introduced training for staff and leaders. These actions have contributed towards much improved safeguarding practices. Leaders have also improved the support for pupils with SEND. Further training is needed to support leaders' abilities to plan the curriculum as effectively as they can. This is particularly the case regarding leaders' work in clarifying exactly what knowledge pupils must learn in each subject.
- This standard is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets 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. 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

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;
 - 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.

School details

Unique reference number	134087
DfE registration number	919/6243
Inspection number	10302853

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
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	72
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	47
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Assim Jemal
Headteacher	Assim Jemal
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,950 to £41,475
Telephone number	01727842348
Website	stalbanscollege.co.uk
Email address	ajemal@stalbanscollege.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	15 to 17 March 2022

Information about this school

- The school has two sites. One site is at 69 London Road, St Albans, AL1 1LN. The other is at 19 Victoria Street, St Albans AL1 3JJ.
- The school provides GCSE and A-level courses. These are provided as two-year, one-year and retake courses.
- 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, members of the senior leadership team, members of staff and pupils.
- The inspector visited lessons in a range of subjects.
- The inspector considered a range of records, including safeguarding records, the single central record and records regarding pupils with SEND. The inspector looked at curriculum plans and leaders' plans to develop the school further.

Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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