



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

St John's College School

September 2021

School's details

School	St John's College School			
DfE number	873/6004			
Registered charity number	1194790			
Address	St John's College School Grange Road Cambridge CB3 9AB			
Telephone number	01223 353532			
Email address	shoffice@sjcs.co.uk			
Headmaster	Neil Chippington			
Chair of governors	Lindsay Dodsworth			
Age Range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	458			
	Day pupils	428	Boarders	30
	EYFS	32	Reception to Year 4	191
	Years 5 to 8	235		
Date of visit	21 September 2021			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 St John’s College School (SJCS) is an independent co-educational boarding and day school. Until September 2021, the school was owned by St John’s College, Cambridge and operated as a charity overseen by the governing body, operating under authority set out in the College Standing Orders. In September 2021, the school became an incorporated charity which the Department for Education (DfE) recognises as the proprietor, although St John’s College remains the school’s owner. The school rents its buildings and land from the college. The college provides financial support for their education at the school to boys who it selects for the college’s chapel choir. The school has 54 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 5 have an education, health and care plan. The school identifies that 132 pupils have been exposed to another language in their early years. The school’s previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in January 2020.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an announced progress monitoring visit at the request of the DfE to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the focused compliance inspection in January 2020. The visit focused on the school’s compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraph 3 (teaching)	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 Teaching 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. It 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; and involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time. Teaching 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. It demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range.
- 2.3 Teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. As a result of the change in governance arrangements the school meets paragraph 3(j) of the independent school standards. The school ensures that equal choral provision and opportunities in a variety of Cambridge colleges and choirs are made available to both male and female pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.4 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.5 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

- 2.6 The school meets the standards.
- 2.7 Implementation of the school's safeguarding procedures is effective in providing appropriate support for pupils' needs.
- 2.8 Safeguarding procedures are implemented to safeguard children at risk and those in need. Staff show effective understanding of their responsibilities, including in those areas which are the focus of most recent changes in safeguarding guidance, in particular elements of peer-on-peer abuse. Suitable recruitment procedures for staff are included within the safeguarding policy. Procedures are effective in monitoring the recruitment checks on members of St John's College who have regular access to choristers either in school or at the college. Staff show appropriate awareness of a suitable staff code of conduct and the school's safeguarding procedures. In interviews, staff showed effective understanding of the training they have received in these areas, including the most recent training which reflected the new elements in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) 2021. They are aware of the action needed to challenge any socially unacceptable behaviour or language towards different genders. They are appropriately informed about referral procedures, including who to go to if they have a concern or receive a disclosure, and that they can make a referral to Cambridge children's services if necessary.
- 2.9 The safeguarding policy includes suitable definitions of abuse and appropriate guidance regarding possible abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil, including linking such abuse to bullying. Risk assessment procedures are provided for determining where immediate action is required in such cases, including referral to local agencies. The school has an effective understanding of the Cambridge

local guidance on reporting peer-on-peer abuse. Discussion with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the school confirmed that pupils receive help to address risks and prevent issues escalating. The DSL acts on and refers the early signs of risk or need and ensures the school listens to the views of individual pupils as required by KCSIE. This is confirmed in written evidence from suitable records. Such records are kept confidential. Staff with particular responsibilities, including for boarders, monitor children in need effectively. Staff are cognisant of the enhanced demands on male and female pupils who are members of the St John's College or other college and national choirs. Arrangements are effective for the supervision of choristers while they are in the college. Effective communication is maintained with parents where appropriate and staff are clear that they cannot promise confidentiality if a parent makes a disclosure which requires action to be taken by the DSL or external agencies. Pupils receive guidance on staying safe and show understanding of what they have been taught, including in relation to e-safety, and monitoring and filtering of technology is effective. St John's College monitors on-line activity in relation to choristers and liaises with the school over any concerns. Pupils report they feel safe and listened to.

- 2.10 The safeguarding policy gives contact details for required local agencies. Appropriate arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in safeguarding procedures; they include seeking immediate advice from the local authority designated safeguarding officers (LADO). The school understands its role in reporting any person whose services are no longer used where referral criteria are met to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA). Alternative persons of appropriate status are provided in the absence of the DSL.
- 2.11 Annual review of safeguarding is appropriate, with the most recent review of policy undertaken in September 2021. There is regular contact between those with safeguarding responsibilities and a nominated governor to liaise regarding safeguarding, and with those responsible for safeguarding arrangements in the college. When incidents linked to safeguarding occur, they are communicated to governors through regular reports and effective review takes place.
- 2.12 The training for the DSL and deputies is appropriate. Training is held in the school for teaching and non-teaching staff, and for those members of the college who come into contact with and/or teach choristers. Training is of sufficient quality and scope and staff understanding is checked appropriately. Central records of staff attendance at training are kept systematically and these ensure that any staff who miss training receive appropriate alternative guidance.

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 13]

- 2.14 The school meets the standards.
- 2.15 Those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met, and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted. Appropriate procedures are implemented effectively which allow governors to monitor compliance with regulations.
- 2.16 At the time of this inspection, the school was not directly responsible for the teaching which was identified as contrary to paragraph 3(j) of the independent school standards at the previous inspection. The change in governance arrangements recognises the college as the school's landlord (owner), but the new SJCS incorporated charity as the proprietor. The proprietor rather than the

owner is responsible for ensuring that the school consistently meets the independent school standards. The school is not directly responsible for the provision of any college choir whose membership is limited to male pupils. Those training the choristers who belong to St John's College Chapel Choir continue to be directly employed by the college, which no longer has a proprietorial role in the school.

- 2.17 The leadership of the school and St John's College are working together to continue to promote the well-being of pupils by developing opportunities for both male and female pupils to access college choirs at St John's College and elsewhere. Whereas financial support from the school in the form of means-tested bursaries is appropriately distributed between male and female pupils, only male pupils are eligible for the choral scholarships provided by the college. Documentation and the deployment of resources already show a commitment to detailed strategies from the school and college to address the current inequality of opportunity on this issue.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Summary of evidence

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