

Additional inspection report

29 to 30 June 2026

St James' School

22 Bargate

Grimsby

DN34 4SY

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

Inspection outcome

The school does not meet all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR paragraphs 1, 2 and 3

1. The school has a suitable curriculum policy that does not undermine British values. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of pupils, including those who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Leaders review curriculum pathways to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For instance, pupils can choose BTEC qualifications in business and physical education (PE). Leaders adapt the school's provision to meet the needs of individual pupils. They provide functional skills courses in English and mathematics for a small proportion of pupils. They offer practical courses to develop skills in cooking and food preparation, under the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).
2. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to develop linguistic skills in English and Spanish. In English, pupils read a range of appropriate texts to understand literary techniques. Pupils use skills they learn in English to structure their writing in other subjects. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 10 to develop confidence in speaking and listening through lessons in public speaking and drama.
3. Pupils develop numerical and problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigative skills in science. They develop aesthetic and creative education in art and music. Pupils apply what they learn to produce collaborative artwork and performances for house assemblies. Pupils develop physical skills in weekly PE lessons. They develop technological skills in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, making links in their learning. For instance, they understand how syntax in coding is similar to grammatical rules when writing a sentence in English.
4. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is delivered through lessons, assemblies and 'drop-down' PSHE days. Pupils are taught how to develop friendships and positive relationships. They understand the importance of respect for all, including those with protected characteristics such as sex, sexual orientation, race, religion and disability. In religious education (RE), pupils discuss religious beliefs about sex outside of marriage and religious attitudes to divorce and remarriage.
5. Leaders ensure that the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is shared with parents. The school makes appropriate arrangements to inform parents so that they have the option to excuse pupils from parts of RSE. Staff adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND. Pupils understand how their bodies change and develop and the importance of consent.
6. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They develop positive and respectful relationships with pupils so that pupils behave well in lessons. Teachers plan lessons so that pupils build on what they know and understand. They plan engaging topics, matched to pupils' interests so that pupils are motivated to learn. Pupils are encouraged to take part in discussions and express their opinions. Teachers use a range of visual and practical resources to enable pupils to make progress. They model how to begin a task so that pupils can learn by observation before they begin their work. Teachers

assess pupils' work and offer feedback so that they understand how to improve and make good progress.

7. Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have SEND provide relevant training for staff. Pupils who have SEND have individual education plans (IEP) so that staff are aware of their needs. This enables staff to ensure that the curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' needs and interests. Learning assistants provide one-to-one support, including scribing, when needed. Digital and practical resources are used effectively to support pupils' individual needs. Staff ensure that pupils with sensory needs can learn in a calm and purposeful environment. Rest breaks and walks are planned to help pupils maintain their concentration and regulate their behaviour. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
8. Leaders provide suitable careers education for pupils. Staff discuss subject choices with pupils for GCSEs, A levels and alternative qualifications provided by the school. Older pupils visit the local university and colleges to understand different pathways, including apprenticeships. Pupils are encouraged to research industries in the local area to find jobs that match their skills. They understand how the skills they learn help them in further education or in the workplace. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND support them in choosing subjects and pathways matched closely to their needs and interests. Pupils are supported in writing personal statements and developing skills to be successful at interviews.
9. The school meets the Standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 8(a), 8(b), 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; NMS 7.1, 8.1, 8.3, 8.4, 9.1, 9.3 and 10.2

10. The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy, in line with statutory guidance. However, the policy is not always implemented effectively. Not all members of the safeguarding team are able to enact their responsibilities with regard to keeping children safe. They have the required training and certification. However, they lack sufficient knowledge and understanding about statutory guidance to carry out their roles effectively.
11. Safeguarding records are not accessible to all members of the safeguarding team. As a result, those with responsibility for safeguarding are not able to act effectively. Safeguarding records are not kept efficiently, or securely, as systems to log concerns are not fully embedded. Safeguarding records are not up-to-date and lack sufficient detail. The safeguarding team does not record how concerns are followed up or actions taken. There is insufficient oversight of safeguarding by the proprietor.
12. Statutory guidance is not followed in relation to prohibition from management checks. These are not always carried out in a timely manner when appointing a new member of staff to the senior leadership team. The proprietor does not provide effective oversight of the safer recruitment process.
13. Leaders work closely with the local authority, police and children's services to promote pupils' wellbeing. They seek advice and act on recommendations, communicating closely with parents as needed.
14. Staff receive safeguarding training as part of their induction, at the start of each term and at staff briefings. They understand their role in identifying and reporting concerns about pupils. Staff are clear about the importance of reporting attendance and following up absences to safeguard pupils. Staff understand the risks to pupils, particularly those who have SEND, and are vigilant and

responsive. They report concerns about pupils promptly to the safeguarding team. Staff are less secure in their understanding of updates to statutory guidance.

15. Leaders seek advice from the local authority when allegations are raised about the conduct of staff. These are recorded in staff files and leaders take appropriate actions. Staff know how to report a concern about adults who work in the school. However, leaders do not promote a culture of openness by offering suitable training to staff. As a result, staff do not understand the purpose and significance of reporting any concerns they may have.
16. Boarding staff understand the need to report concerns about pupils. Staff are aware of risks associated with boarders sharing overnight accommodation. They provide separate access to male and female accommodation. However, leaders do not take sufficient action to ensure that harmful content is not accessed on pupils' devices in the boarding house.
17. Pupils know who they can go to if they have a concern. There are posters around the school indicating who they can speak to, including appropriate children's services such as Childline. Boarders have contact details for the independent person.
18. Internet filtering systems are appropriate and alerts are reported to leaders. Any alerts are monitored and followed up sensitively. Leaders are alert to the vulnerability of pupils, for example, when alerts relate to pupils who have SEND.
19. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online in PSHE and in ICT lessons. They understand the need to keep their personal details private when they are using the internet. Pupils know when and how to seek help if they access inappropriate content when they are online.
20. The school has a suitable written health and safety policy. However, this is not implemented effectively. Leaders do not ensure that health and safety is a priority. Health and safety procedures lack rigour. As a result, certain health and safety matters are not addressed. For instance, windows on the ground and upper floors in the boarding house, as well as some windows in parts of the school, can be opened wide. There are some windows with cracked glass that could cause injury to staff or pupils. Not enough care is taken to lock away sharp tools in the art room. Broken glass in the chemistry laboratory is collected separately but the bin is not emptied regularly and is easily accessible to pupils.
21. The school has clear evacuation plans, including in the boarding house. Fire extinguishers around the school building are checked regularly. However, some fire extinguishers in the unused flat at the top of the school have not been checked to ensure they are suitable for purpose. The proprietor ensures external fire safety checks are carried out. However, the proprietor does not respond in a timely manner to recommendations made.
22. The first aid policy is not implemented effectively. First aid records are not maintained accurately or with sufficient detail. Medicines are administered with parental permission, but consent is usually verbal rather than written. First aid records cannot be accessed easily by all staff who might need to access them.
23. Pupils are closely supervised when in school and on excursions. Boarding staff accompany pupils to and from the boarding house. Boarders can contact a member of the boarding house team during the night if required.
24. The admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately. Staff are diligent in following up absence. Leaders inform the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. Leaders are aware of pupils who do not attend regularly. Leaders promote attendance by

working closely with parents and pupils. This has resulted in improvements in pupils' attendance, including those who have SEND.

25. The risk assessment policy is not implemented effectively. Systems for identifying risks, and then reducing any risk identified, are not rigorous enough. For example, not enough care is taken to mitigate the possibility of pupils being injured by cracked windows and broken glass in the chemistry laboratory. In the art room, there is insufficient risk analysis as shown by an unlocked cupboard with sharp tools and easy access to the boiler.
26. The school does not meet the Standards.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraphs 23, 24 and 25; NMS 9.2

27. The school provides toilet and washing facilities for pupils. However, toilets for female pupils are kept locked and pupils are required to find a member of staff who has a key before they can access the toilet facilities. Not all the drinking water fountains are in working order.
28. There is suitable accommodation for first aid and the short-term care of sick pupils.
29. Premises and accommodation are not always maintained to promote health and safety. A fence has been erected to improve site security at the school. Some windows with cracked glass have been temporarily boarded up. In the boarding house, cleaning materials and maintenance tools are not always locked away. CCTV outside the boarding house is not activated to support safety arrangements.
30. The school does not meet the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraphs 32(1)(c) and 32(1)(d)

31. The safeguarding policy is shared with parents via the school's website.
32. All previous inspection reports were not shared on the website as required by the Standards. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
33. The school meets the Standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

ISSR paragraph 33; NMS 14

34. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is shared with parents. Complaints are managed in line with the timescales and procedures in the policy and records are kept securely. Boarders are aware of how they can raise complaints about boarding provision.
35. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c); NMS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.7

36. The proprietor does not ensure that leaders have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their roles effectively. The school's safeguarding, safer recruitment and health and safety

arrangements do not actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. There is no systematic oversight by the proprietor in these areas. As a result, the Standards are not met consistently in several areas.

37. Prohibition from management checks are not carried out in a timely manner when appointing a new member of staff to the senior leadership team. The proprietor does not provide effective oversight of the single central record of appointments.
38. Boarding staff do not have suitable job descriptions. As a result, they are not secure in their understanding of statutory requirements related to their roles.
39. The school does not meet the Standards.

Schedule of unmet Standards

Paragraph number	Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSR)
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 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.
ISSR Part 3 paragraph 8	Where section 87(1) of the Children Act 1989 applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
8(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
8(b)	such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Children under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
ISSR Part 3 paragraph 11	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
ISSR Part 3 paragraph 12	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
ISSR Part 3 paragraph 13	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
ISSR Part 3 paragraph 16	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
16(a)	the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
16(b)	appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
ISSR Part 5 paragraph 23	Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
23(1)(a)	suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils
ISSR Part 5 paragraph 25	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
ISSR Part 8 paragraph 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 wellbeing of pupils.

Paragraph number	National Minimum Standards for boarding schools 2022 (NMS)
NMS 2.1	The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
NMS 2.2	The school's leadership and management, including its governing body where appropriate, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, appropriate to their role and undertake appropriate training as required.
NMS 2.4	The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met.
NMS 2.5	The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
NMS 2.7	The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix A, 23: Job descriptions for staff with boarding duties and safeguarding responsibilities.
NMS 7.1	The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of boarders who have medical conditions and/or are unwell, ensures that the physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing of boarders are promoted and prompt action is taken when health concerns are identified. The policies include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies and the use of both prescription and non-prescription medication (including controlled drugs). Policies for administration of medication should reflect, where appropriate, guidance provided by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Royal College of Nursing.
NMS 8.1	The school should ensure that: • arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; • and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
NMS 8.3	It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The school's approach to online safety should be reflected in the child protection policy, having regard to the Department's Keeping children safe in education guidance.
NMS 8.4	Keeping children safe in education sets out that boarding schools have additional factors to consider with regard to safeguarding. As such it will be important that the boarding school's child protection policy (and/or other policies if appropriate) reflect: • the school's policy on sexual relationships between children (and importance of boarders understanding this policy); • the school's approach to child-on-child abuse, reflecting the unique nature of boarding accommodation and the risks associated with

	children sharing overnight accommodation; • the approach to protecting children where there is a significant gender imbalance in the school; and • the approach to harmful online content and how boarders' devices are managed in terms of bringing a device into the school, and harmful content that may already be downloaded on to it, and the opportunity to download harmful content via 3, 4 and 5G that will bypass the school's filtering and monitoring systems.
NMS 9.1	The school ensures compliance with relevant health and safety laws by drawing up and effectively implementing a written health and safety policy. Staff undertake sufficient training to ensure the policy is followed in practice.
NMS 9.2	The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured, and they are provided a safe environment in which they can live and learn.
NMS 9.3	The school ensures that the welfare of boarders at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
NMS 10.2	The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and ensures alerting systems are accessible and there are clear evacuation plans for all children subject to their needs.

School details

School	St James' School
Department for Education number	812/6000
Registered charity number	1099060
Address	St James' School 22 Bargate Grimsby Lincolnshire DN34 4SY
Phone number	01472 503260
Email address	enquiries@saintjamesschool.co.uk
Website	www.saintjamesschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Alpha Schools (Holdings) Ltd
Chair	Mr Ali Khan
Headteacher	Miss Trudy Harris
Age range	11 to 18
Number of pupils	66
Number of boarding pupils	5
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 January 2025

Information about the school

40. St James' School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. It is located close to the town centre of Grimsby in Lincolnshire. The school is owned by Alpha Schools (Holdings) Ltd, which appoints directors to oversee its operation. The school includes a small sixth form.
41. Accommodation for male and female boarders is provided in a single boarding house in close proximity to the main school site. At the time of the inspection, three female boarders and two short-term, male boarders were in residence.
42. The school has identified 45 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are 26 pupils in the school who have an education, health and care plan.
43. The school has identified English is an additional language for a small number of pupils.
44. The school states that its aims are to help pupils maximise their potential through personalised learning in a caring environment which is rich in opportunity. It strives to enable pupils to discover their strengths and talents in a setting that is intended to nurture creativity, encourage flexibility and embrace independence.

Purpose of the additional inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced additional monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the Department for Education.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

29 to 30 June 2026

45. One reporting inspector and an accompanying reporting inspector visited the school for two days.

46. Inspection activities included

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- a tour of the school site
- visits to lessons
- discussions and visits to lessons with the leader of provision for pupils who have SEND
- discussions with the proprietor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils and parents
- visits to the boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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