

School inspection report

16 to 18 April 2024

Bath Academy

27 Queen Square

Bath

Somerset

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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'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor, advisory board of governors and leaders work together to provide an education which gives personal attention to individual pupils. Leaders prioritise pupils' wellbeing and consideration of this informs decisions taken about all aspects of the school and boarding community.
2. Leaders implement appropriate safeguarding procedures which ensures the effective safeguarding of pupils. Leaders maintain efficient relationships with relevant external agencies and actively seek guidance when needed.
3. Leaders are well trained and have appropriate experience. The recently formed senior academic leadership team provides effective oversight and strategic direction of teaching and learning.
4. Leaders provide parents and the local authority with required information. However, the boarding handbook needed to be updated during the inspection to accurately identify the independent person who boarders may contact about any concerns or problems.
5. The assessment framework is effective. Pupils have personalised weekly assessments which evolve over the year. These help pupils to gain confidence and work towards improving their examination results.
6. Careers guidance is tailored to the needs of each pupil. Alongside psychometric testing, regular online meetings between staff and pupils provides helpful guidance. Leaders and teaching staff willingly share their own academic experience and expertise to enhance pupils' understanding of university and future professional careers.
7. Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a revised tutorial system and enrichment programme, both of which respond to the needs of pupils. Tutors have individual appointments and meet with pupils to review their progress and ensure that effective support is in place. The enrichment programme provides pupils with further support, such as strategies for dealing with stress.
8. There are very few behavioural or bullying issues, and, when they do arise, they are resolved quickly. Leaders and staff encourage mutual trust and a positive culture of respect for people's protected characteristics, such as sexual orientation, disability and race.
9. Pupils, including boarders, demonstrate mutual respect and appreciation of cultural diversity. Leaders ensure the suitability of host families and lodgings through appropriate checks and termly visits. Leaders communicate the school's expectations to host families through regular meetings with the welfare officer.
10. Pupils can apply to be what are known as 'representatives', each having a focus on different aspects of the school, such as boarding. The school has equality ambassadors who focus on neurodiversity, gender and racial equality. They take their work seriously and have an impact on decision making in the school, such as about the curriculum and accommodation.
11. Pupils demonstrate a developed sense of social responsibility. They support many local and national charities.

12. Boarders appreciate the caring and tolerant atmosphere within boarding. Boarding accommodation is suitable. However, some minor issues, such as some windows lacking restrictors and an unlocked fuse box, needed to be rectified during the inspection.
13. The proprietor and leaders have allowed the school to operate outside of its registration with the Department for Education (DfE). The school is currently registered for pupils aged 14 to 19 years, but currently includes pupils who exceed the maximum age, that the school is authorised to cater for.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the school only operates within its registration with the DfE
- strengthen the monitoring of boarding accommodation to ensure that any minor issues that arise are identified and resolved
- ensure that information provided in the boarding handbook is kept up to date.

Section 1: Leadership, management and governance

14. The proprietor, the advisory governing body and school leaders are fully involved in the evaluation of the school. They work effectively overall to quality assure and monitor the school's provision. Representatives of the proprietary body know the school well and visit regularly to monitor the school. Leaders are aware of the strengths of the school and know the areas which require further development. They regularly review their policies and procedures and ensure that these meet regulatory requirements. However, the proprietor and leaders have operated the school outside of its registration with the DfE by catering for pupils beyond the age range that the school is authorised to admit.
15. Leaders ensure effective risk assessment and management. Appropriate risk assessments are in place for a wide range of areas, which include premises, boarding, trips and hazardous activities. Risk assessments include specific control measures to reduce the risks that are identified, and make it clear who is responsible for implementing these.
16. School leaders and managers have received appropriate training to give them sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding to effectively promote the wellbeing of all pupils. Leaders create an environment where all feel welcome. Senior leaders and staff work well so that pupils with diverse backgrounds can work towards the qualifications they need to secure a place at university or pursue their chosen career.
17. The recently formed academic leadership team provides effective oversight and strategic direction of teaching and learning at the academy. This helps ensure that teaching is tailored to the needs of the individual pupils. Learning is underpinned with regular assessments which directly informs teaching and lesson planning.
18. The school provides parents with the required information on the school website or by request. Parents receive half-termly reports which benchmark pupils' progress. However, the identity of the independent person had recently been changed, and whilst noticeboards and online handbooks had been altered to reflect this, not all boarding information had been updated to reflect the correct information.
19. Leaders provide the local authority with all required information in connection with any pupils who receive funding.
20. Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act, including through the implementation of an up-to-date accessibility plan.
21. Leaders maintain effective relationships with external agencies. They regularly seek guidance to inform their work in safeguarding and supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
22. The complaints policy is published on the school's website. Leaders respond to complaints promptly and make themselves accessible to parents. Appropriate records of complaints and any actions taken as a result of these are maintained by leaders to detect any emerging trends.
23. The proprietor and senior leaders monitor boarding to ensure that the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS) are met. Leaders and staff with responsibility for boarding are

conversant with the requirements and apply them effectively. As a result, arrangements for boarding accommodation, induction, fire safety, appropriate pastoral support and supervision are secure.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

24. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

25. The curriculum includes a broad and suitable range of subjects and is adapted to respond to the needs of all groups of pupils. It includes traditional options such as GCSE and A level alongside the university foundation programme and international medical foundation programme. Teaching is adapted to suit individual pupils' aptitudes, with well-planned lessons in which pupils apply intellectual effort and acquire new knowledge.
26. Leaders undertake regular learning walks to maintain the effectiveness of teaching and encourage staff and pupils to be ambitious. These walks are used to both monitor teaching and gain insight into the learning environment of pupils. New senior academic leadership roles have been introduced to ensure that effective practice in teaching and learning is maintained whilst ensuring that teaching responds to the needs of pupils and does not undermine fundamental British values.
27. Lessons are well planned, demonstrating high levels of subject knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. Teachers have a good understanding of the individual pupils' aptitudes, needs and educational achievements. Teachers provide pupils with effective individual support, checking their responses and clarifying any misconceptions through the use of regular, thorough, and supportive assessment tasks.
28. Teachers use effective teaching methods. They provide appropriate levels of challenge, manage class time and behaviour well and use a range of good quality classroom resources. As a result, pupils are interested in their work, regularly apply creative effort and are self-motivated.
29. Course leaders check pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and level of understanding, including through regular assessments of their progress in all subjects. Feedback provided by teachers and tutors is effective in driving individual academic progress, including that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils value the feedback they receive, as it enables them to articulate their own strengths and areas for development and helps them make good progress.
30. Pupils who have SEND have an individual education plan which is shared with all relevant teaching staff. Pupils' needs are identified through careful analysis of data and professional dialogue, resulting in meticulous curriculum planning. The processes for the identification of these needs are consistently applied, through close collaboration with pupils, parents, the local authority and other relevant bodies. Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have SEND have appropriate skills and knowledge. Staff receive training to enable them to adapt their teaching in lessons to meet the needs of this group of pupils.
31. Teaching is adapted effectively when required for pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils' abilities and needs in speaking, listening, reading and writing are assessed during their first term in the school, and results shared with tutors. This process enables leaders and staff to identify whether any Additional support for individual pupils who have EAL is needed.
32. There is a rigorous framework of assessment for each pupil. Pupils' progress is tracked systematically using baseline data, with target effort and attainment grades. Leaders use their resultant understanding to identify pupils' learning needs and provide additional support where required.

33. There are suitable recreational opportunities for pupils of all abilities. Pupils develop their physical skills by accessing an extensive range of local sports facilities. Co-curricular provision positively impacts on pupils' social wellbeing, through activities such as drama, photography, visits to local museums and a gardening club. Boarders develop their intellectual, emotional and creative skills by experiencing a range of trips and activities, such as ice skating, paddle boarding and visits to cultural sites such as the Roman Baths and to a range of British cities.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

34. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

35. Leaders and staff maintain an emotionally warm, supportive and respectful learning environment and provide pupils with praise and encouragement, which develops their self-esteem and self-confidence. Personal tutors help ensure that the emotional needs of the pupils are addressed, including through the provision of additional pastoral support when required.
36. School leaders and teachers actively promote and model positive behaviour and courtesy. As a result, there are very few behavioural and bullying issues amongst pupils. Leaders respond effectively to the small incidents of poor behaviour, ensuring there are appropriate sanctions, and that additional support is put in place for pupils. Leaders monitor behaviour and bullying effectively to identify any trends and patterns that may need to be addressed.
37. Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a programme of physical education (PE) known as 'BA Active', with the intention of creating an inclusive provision responsive to the needs of pupils. Pupils develop their physical skills confidently in areas such as trampolining, gardening, orienteering, gym, golf, tennis and boules. The PE and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programmes contribute to pupils' understanding of the benefits of exercise and how it can contribute to their own mental health and emotional wellbeing.
38. The caring approach of boarding leaders and staff help boarders to form positive relationships with each other and with staff. Boarders' views are welcomed by boarding staff and taken seriously. Boarders are provided with food that is varied and nutritious. The school caters for individual dietary requirements effectively, taking account of allergies, religious requirements, and dietary preferences.
39. The boarding accommodation is spacious, appropriately equipped and well maintained. However, a few minor issues in the accommodation were noted during the inspection, namely, a fuse box being unlocked and the absence of a small number of window restrictors. Once identified, these issues were resolved immediately.
40. The school includes suitable accommodation for pupils' first aid and therapy needs, and provides an appropriate physical environment for pupils. There are a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid.
41. Pupils receive appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE), which includes topics such as healthy relationships, online safety, sexual health, impact of drugs, relationships and the law. The positive values of the school are taught explicitly through the PSHE programme, which explores topics such as e-safety, the risks of drug taking, and personal physical and mental health. External speakers visit the school to support the school in encouraging respect for different groups, such as those who have SEND and those representing diverse sexual orientation. In PSHE, pupils are invited to suggest topics that they would like included alongside the core programme. This year pupils have chosen 'hidden disabilities', demonstrating understanding of the importance of raising awareness of disability.
42. The enrichment programme includes a range of courses on mental health and managing examination stress. The programme also develops spiritual understanding through mindfulness and

yoga. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the non-material aspects of life by engaging with nature and exploring the beauty of the world.

43. The admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with regulatory requirements. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely and absenteeism is followed up. Leaders inform the local authority as required when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times.
44. Effective deployment of staff ensures that suitable supervision is in place. Wardens who oversee boarding throughout the day and night. There is an appropriate handover system and online diary which keeps boarding staff informed about any issues which may have arisen during the day and night. Members of staff are always available to support pupils, including during boarding time.
45. Health and safety, first aid and fire safety measures are effective. Leaders make use of external specialists to conduct regular checks and maintenance with regard to, for example, electrical and gas safety, fire safety equipment and the suitability of water. An up-to-date fire risk assessment is in place. Staff receive suitable training in fire safety and there are a sufficient number of trained first aiders to provide effective cover.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.

- 46. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

47. Leaders and staff develop pupils' respect for diverse people and cultures by exploring these in PSHE and religious education programmes of study, and by discussing issues related to Women's history and equal rights for those of diverse sexual orientation. Pupils feel the school is very respectful and tolerant. The school encourages mutual trust and respect between people, including those whose characteristics, such as their religion, belief or sexual orientation, are protected by equality legislation.
48. British values, such as those of respect and tolerance, are explicitly taught in PSHE lessons, in the English language training course, and consistently messaged across the school site. Pupils learn about democracy in PSHE and involvement in Model United Nations activities. They engage in the democratic selection and appointment of representatives. In addition, there are a variety of school trips related to developing a respect for democracy and the rule of law, such as trips to London to visit the Houses of Parliament.
49. The pupil-led initiative known as the 'Boarders Charter' reflects the school's positive values and promotes the importance of accepting responsibility and understanding right from wrong. The charter recognises the importance of boarders being able to express their views and encourages them to understand the impact of their decisions on the lives of others.
50. PSHE lessons help develop pupils' economic understanding through by providing guidance about personal financial management, including that applicable to university life or employment. Other subjects explore economic issues when relevant, such as the exploration of local economy systems in geography.
51. Careers guidance promotes pupils' access to apprenticeships, internships and universities. All pupils have access to a proprietorial platform, with an assessment at the point of entry into the school, an individual profile assessment, followed by individualised online meetings. These meetings ensure that pupils know how to make informed choices and identify the suitable possible routes towards their chosen career. Staff provide pupils with effective advice about how to apply for apprenticeships, employment and university places. Pupils learn about interview techniques, UCAS applications and writing personal statements.
52. The school's enrichment programme includes a range of activities such as mindfulness, managing stress in relation to examinations, listening skills, effective learning techniques, team building and community cohesion. The university foundation programme includes content that helps prepare pupils for the expectations and practical aspects of university study.
53. A body of pupil representatives express the views of different groups of pupils in the school. The representatives demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards others and have an impact on decision making in the school. The representatives have made suggestions about improving the school site, including changes to the common room and new workstations in other common areas. In addition, they have played a key role in redesigning the SEND department so that it provides a quiet space for those pupils who wish to use it.

54. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to both the local and wider community. For example, some pupils volunteer with St John's Ambulance, while others participate in events such as the 'Bath Clean Up'. Pupils have supported a local homeless charity by holding a baking day. They have organised events to support charities of their choice, such as Cancer Research UK, Walk to Ukraine and Show Racism the Red Card.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society.

55. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

56. Leaders implement a suitable safeguarding policy effectively. The proprietor monitors the school's safeguarding arrangements efficiently, including through regular meetings with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), scrutiny of regular safeguarding reports and the results of an annual audit. The safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect current statutory guidance.
57. Leaders maintain appropriate relationships with external safeguarding partners. They are aware of local safeguarding issues. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate training for their role. They respond to safeguarding concerns effectively and maintain accurate and appropriate records of these and actions taken as a result. The school has appropriate arrangements for responding to allegations against staff, including low-level concerns.
58. All staff receive suitable safeguarding training during induction. This is followed by regular safeguarding training and updates which enable staff to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and the different types of abuse. Staff know how to respond to and report any safeguarding concerns that might arise. They have received training about the 'Prevent' duty and know how to detect signs of radicalisation.
59. Pupils feel able to express any concerns as they arise. They feel safe and can identify trusted members of staff that they can speak to. Through PSHE lessons and tutorial sessions, pupils receive guidance about staying safe online. Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
60. Leaders and members of the proprietary body and advisory board of governors have received safer recruitment training. Leaders ensure the suitability of staff by carrying out all required pre-employment checks and maintaining an accurate single central register of appointments.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding.

- 61. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Bath Academy
Department for Education number	800/6015
Address	Bath Academy 27 Queen Square Bath Somerset BA1 2HX
Phone number	01225 334577
Email address	admissions@bathacademy.co.uk
Website	www.bathacademy.co.uk
Proprietor	Bath Academy Ltd
Chair	Mr David Game
Principal	Mr Tim Naylor
Age range	14 to 19
Number of pupils	118
Number of boarding pupils	22
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 February 2020

Information about the school

62. Founded in 1995, Bath Academy is an independent co-educational day and boarding school located in three Georgian buildings in Bath city centre. Governance is provided by the directors supported by an advisory governing body. The school is a tutorial college which prepares pupils for university entrance through GCSE, A levels or the university foundation programme and other qualifications.
63. Boarders are accommodated in one boarding house which accommodates female and male pupils. Nine pupils are accommodated in homestays with local families.
64. The school has identified 18 pupils who have SEND. 14 pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
65. English is an additional language for 40 pupils.
66. The school states its aims are to create a safe, inclusive and caring environment where pupils from around the world are taught in small groups, and have their individual needs taken into account, so that they can achieve well. It endeavours to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and self-esteem so that they are well-prepared for adult life.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

16 to 18 April 2024

67. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

68. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor and a member of the advisory board of governors
- discussions with the principal, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

69. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

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**.

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