

# Progress monitoring inspection report

27 January 2026

## **St Columba's College**

King Harry Lane

St Albans

Hertfordshire

AL3 4AW

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 meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

## Inspection findings

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

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 14, 15, 16

1. Leaders have established a positive safeguarding culture across the school. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and reflect the requirements of current statutory guidance. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns that arise. They consult with external safeguarding partners and refer concerns to them when appropriate. Leaders maintain suitable records of safeguarding concerns and detail the decisions and actions taken in response.
2. There are suitable arrangements in place for the handling of allegations against staff or senior leaders, including the reporting and follow-up of low-level concerns. These arrangements are well understood by staff, including procedures for self-reporting when this is relevant.
3. Safeguarding induction and training for staff, including for the safeguarding team, are thorough, regular and reflect local requirements. Leaders provide regular safeguarding updates for all staff. This is supplemented by online courses which also assess staff knowledge so that leaders are alert to training needs. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to escalate concerns when required.
4. Governors maintain an effective overview of the implementation of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. Governors ensure there are thorough reviews of safeguarding practice at the school. All governors undertake suitable training in safeguarding.
5. Leaders are aware of the contextual risks and challenges facing pupils beyond the school, including the potential risks relating to radicalisation and extremism. Leaders provide a number of ways for pupils to raise any concerns that they might have. Pupils know who to go to should they wish to share any concerns and that staff will act promptly.
6. Leaders ensure there is effective supervision of pupils on the school site. Appropriate staffing ratios on school trips are informed by the school's risk assessment procedures which take into account the nature of activities and the pupils involved.
7. The school maintains a suitable admission register which contains the required information. Leaders liaise appropriately with the local authority when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard transition points.
8. Since the previous inspection, leaders have implemented measures to ensure that attendance registers are maintained correctly. Staff and pupils are aware of the school's procedures to promote positive school attendance. Form tutors and heads of houses systematically monitor attendance in order to identify and address any concerns. Pastoral staff work with the senior attendance champion to support pupils and their families so that pupils attend school regularly. The school notifies the local authority appropriately about any concerns it may have relating to attendance.
9. Leaders ensure that risk assessments are detailed and thorough. Leaders systematically review risk assessments for their effectiveness, taking into account lessons learned from any incidents or in response to any update of school procedures. Staff are aware of the procedures for carrying out risk

assessments and how they are managed and are briefed appropriately on the details of the specific risk assessments that relate to activities they are involved in.

10. The school meets the Standards.

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

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

11. Leaders publish a suitable safeguarding policy on the school's website. This policy has due regard for the local context and reflects statutory guidance.

12. The school meets the Standards.

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

ISSR paragraph 34

13. Since the previous inspection, leaders have devised a detailed action plan and implemented it effectively. Leaders have undertaken relevant training and liaise effectively with the local authority around safeguarding and attendance procedures. Leaders ensure that staff have the training they need to ensure that records relating to safeguarding concerns about pupils or staff are detailed and precise.

14. Governors provide leaders with appropriate oversight and challenge and ensure that leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Governors ensure that leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils and that the Standards are consistently met.

15. The school meets the Standards.

## School details

<b>School</b>	St Columba's College
<b>Department for Education number</b>	919/6136
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1088480
<b>Address</b>	St Columba's College King Harry Lane St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 4AW
<b>Phone number</b>	01727 855185
<b>Email address</b>	collegeadmin@stcolumbascollege.org
<b>Website</b>	www.stcolumbascollege.org
<b>Proprietor</b>	Brothers of the Sacred Heart
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Barbara Elliot
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Karl Guest
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	823
<b>Number of children in the early years setting</b>	9
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 April to 1 May 2025

## Information about the school

16. St Columba's College is a co-educational Catholic day school located in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The school is a registered charity governed by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.
17. There are 9 children in the early years, comprising one Reception class.
18. The school has identified 372 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
19. The school has identified 134 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
20. The school states that its aims are to provide a holistic education that is rooted in religious values, structured through friendly discipline, nurtured by personal attention and committed to academic excellence.

## Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the Department for Education. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

27 January 2026

21. One reporting inspector visited the school for one day.

22. Inspection activities included

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- discussions with a member of the governing body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils.

### 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

#### Independent Schools Inspectorate

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