



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Battle Abbey School

March–April 2022

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School's Details

School	Battle Abbey School			
DfE number	845/6018			
Registered charity number	306998			
Address	Battle Abbey School High Street Battle East Sussex TN33 0AD			
Telephone number	01424 772385			
Email address	office@battleabbey.school.com			
Headmaster	Mr David Clark			
Proprietor	BAS School Ltd			
Age range	0 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	573			
	Day pupils	524	Boarders	49
	EYFS	86	Juniors	111
	Seniors	266	Sixth Form	110
Inspection dates	30 March to 1 April 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Battle Abbey School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. The senior school is located at Battle Abbey, and the prep school and nursery are on separate sites approximately eight miles away in Bexhill-on-Sea. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. Boarding is available from the age of 11. Boarders are accommodated in the boarding house in the school grounds and at 'Marylands', situated in the town of Battle.
- 1.2 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to inspire pupils to aspire for excellence in all that they undertake and to acknowledge and reward the achievements of each individual. It seeks to promote the balanced social development of pupils and to prepare pupils for life after school enabling them to contribute positively to the changing world.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils live within a 30-minute commute of the school. Boarders come mainly from the UK and Europe, with the remainder drawn from many areas of the world. The school has identified 78 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) such as for dyslexia. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 22 pupils who speak English as an additional language, who are supported in class or small groups. The school modifies the curriculum for pupils it identifies as the most able in the school's population.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the senior school, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2021 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the prep school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to promote good behaviour; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; suitable provision is made for first aid care of day pupils. Admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented. Suitable provision for managing boarders' laundry and possessions is in place. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained.
- 2.11 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not always pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The school does not ensure that all staff who carry out teaching work have been checked against the list of those prohibited from teaching before they commence work.
- 2.12 The proprietors undertake a review of safeguarding, but this is not sufficiently robust to ensure suitable practice is in place to ensure the welfare of pupils.

- 2.13 Suitable provision for boarders' medical and health care is not provided for all boarders. In particular, female boarders at 'Marylands' do not have access to suitable medical accommodation which is adequately separated from other female boarders.
- 2.14 Boarding pupils at 'Marylands' are not always under the responsibility of an identified member of staff if they remain in the boarding house during the school day when they are sick or on study leave.
- 2.15 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9-12, 15 and 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 and NMS 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 16 are met, but those in paragraphs 7(a) and (b); 8(a) and (b) (safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders), 13 (first aid), 14 (supervision of pupils) and NMS 3, 11, and 15 are not met.**

Action point 1

The school must ensure that all staff who carry out teaching work are checked against prohibition from teaching before they commence work [paragraph 7(a) and (b) and paragraph 8(a) and (b); NMS 11.1; EYFS 3.7].

Action point 2

The proprietors must ensure that their review of safeguarding is suitably robust to ensure the welfare of pupils [paragraph 7(a) and (b) and paragraph 8(a) and (b); NMS 11.1; EYFS 3.7].

Action point 3

The school must ensure that suitable provision is made for medical and health care provision of female boarders at 'Marylands', by providing suitable accommodation to cater for their medical needs at night, which is suitably separate from other female boarders [paragraph 13; NMS 3.2 and, for the same reason, paragraph 8(b)].

Action point 4

The school must ensure that pupils at 'Marylands', are suitably supervised by an identified member of staff [paragraph 14; NMS 15.4 and, for the same reason, paragraph 8(b)].

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.16 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.17 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.18 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.19 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.20 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

2.21 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.22 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

2.23 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.24 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management, including that of boarding, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.25 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 13 are not met.

Action point 5

The proprietor must ensure that practices of leadership and management, including that of boarding, are effectively monitored to ensure they demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1 and 13.3 –13.5].

3. The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 3.2 The planning, designing and implementation of the curriculum by leaders, managers and practitioners ensure the educational programmes meet the unique needs and interests of each child. The curriculum is regularly monitored to fully assess the impact on a child's learning.
- 3.3 The recommendation from the previous inspection has been successfully implemented. Practitioners have reviewed their practice to allow children to develop deeper levels of interest, focus and curiosity, by providing fewer activities at one time.
- 3.4 Care practices, along with the understanding of each child's level of development, meet the needs of all children, including those who have specific needs. Children for whom there is a concern are well supported. Regular meetings with parents and outside agencies enable these children to progress rapidly.
- 3.5 All children make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning, moving to their new class when ready. Most children meet expectations in the areas of learning.
- 3.6 When children leave their main carer, or when a routine changes, they consistently demonstrate that they feel very secure. Strong and positive relationships are formed with their key person and children display high levels of personal and emotional security.
- 3.7 Practitioners understand how to protect the children, who feel safe and cared for, due to the strong culture of shared responsibility evident throughout the setting. Requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met. Failures of safeguarding in the main school do not apply to the registered nursery, as there is no requirement to check those who work in such settings against the list of those subject to prohibition from teaching orders. Leaders and managers have a sound understanding of the EYFS learning requirements as well as a shared vision for future development. Their regular evaluation of provision is very effective, enabling them to plan a secure way forward for all children.

Quality of education

- 3.8 The quality of education is good.
- 3.9 Educational programmes are based on an understanding of each child's needs, interests and level of development. Knowledge gained from parents and previous experiences contributes valuable information to this understanding, enabling practitioners to plan curriculum intentions that provide for each child. Leaders and managers monitor the curriculum, ensuring that curriculum intentions are met and that teaching is sufficiently challenging.
- 3.10 Children are supported and challenged in their learning, ensuring each child makes progress in all areas. Meaningful curriculum activities are implemented, based on each child's needs and interests. Children interested in tractors are given activities about the farm to encourage their language development. Children's desire to learn is evidenced by their motivation and curiosity as they deepen their knowledge and skills. Time spent with each child enables practitioners to assess what children know and can do, and to plan for further progress.
- 3.11 Carefully planned learning experiences within enabling environments provide all children with opportunities to build on previous knowledge and extend their learning. The impact this learning has upon each child is well understood by the knowledgeable key persons who prepare the children for the next stage in their learning and for future success. Practitioners and parents collaborate over the

best time for a child to move to the next class, based on their language development as well as their physical and emotional readiness.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 3.12 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 3.13 Children engage with activities effectively. They are given uninterrupted time to play and explore different materials on the sensory mat, investigating noises and textures. Toddlers show a high level of willingness to have a go at putting puzzle pieces back into a puzzle, even when they are not fully successful. They persevere and don't give up easily.
- 3.14 Children are extremely active learners who show great enthusiasm and a strong desire to find out more. They respond very competently to simple instructions and use simple words with increasing skill to communicate their actions or needs. Children are highly motivated in their play and extremely curious. They press buttons on the toy drill to activate it and investigate what it might do next. Their pleasure in their achievements motivates them to try again.
- 3.15 When using their initiative and attempting to lift a box of blocks from a cupboard, older toddlers show a high degree of perseverance until they are able to move the box. Their pleasure at such success is evident and they then demonstrate their ability to make different shapes with the building blocks. Children are introduced to simple shapes and counting during different activities. Opportunities to use mathematical language more consistently during daily routines, in order to develop these skills further, are sometimes missed.
- 3.16 Children are creative thinkers and very successfully develop their own ideas when investigating foam on a tray. One child fully engages with great enthusiasm with all the foam, whilst another child is extremely careful and attentive as they paint the foam onto a small dinosaur and then makes dinosaur footprints on the floor. Children show a high level of creativity whilst thinking independently in this activity. Another toddler discovers what happens when a toy banana and a toy car are rolled down a slide together. Making excellent links, the child then slides down the slide too.
- 3.17 The excellent partnership between the setting and parents fosters the children's attendance and encourages excellent habits for future learning. Parents are kept regularly informed about their child's learning and progress through the online learning journal and personal contact with the key persons. Children's valuable achievements at home are shared by parents reinforcing this very strong partnership. Practitioners are always available to listen to parents' concerns and are very supportive. Children are taught to be considerate. Practitioners and parents work extremely well together to support and encourage children's excellent behaviour.

Personal development

- 3.18 The personal development of children is good.
- 3.19 Provision of the curriculum as well as the effectiveness of a key person's knowledge of each child's unique needs and interests, ensure children are well supported in their emotional and character development. Children seek out their key person when needing assurance showing they feel emotionally secure. They happily engage with a visitor by sharing their toys, showing how secure they feel.
- 3.20 Practitioners encourage greater confidence and resilience as children make their own choices and develop their skills. The children's use of vocabulary, when asking where puzzle pieces are, demonstrates their growing independence and confidence in language skills. When preparing for and eating lunch, children demonstrate an increased level of independence. Good relationships are built between children and key persons enabling children to learn and develop extremely well.
- 3.21 As a result of the caring and supportive provision by all key persons, children become secure physically and emotionally. Practitioners demonstrate commitment to the children as they encourage and

support them when using larger apparatus in the hall. This encourages children to try new activities, take risks and develop confidence.

- 3.22 Children respond well to familiar routines especially at mealtimes and when going outside. Secure attachments with their key person along with familiar routines promote children's independence and well-being. When children need extra reassurance practitioners' response is warm and supportive, enabling children to feel secure. They are encouraged to make positive relationships and manage their own feelings, enabling strong bonds to be created between children and key persons.
- 3.23 Nutritious meals and snacks are enjoyed by the children as they share mealtimes together. Practitioners ensure that allergy needs, and food preferences, are known by adults and catered for, ensuring the safety of all children. Many opportunities are provided for children to be physically active in both the indoor and outdoor environment. The outdoor areas of provision are used each day to strengthen motor skills and enjoyment of the outdoors. As they balance and climb children grow in confidence. They know how to be careful of others who are playing nearby, especially outside.
- 3.24 Practitioners have a sound knowledge of policies and procedures and implement them appropriately. They are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe, thus ensuring the setting meets the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare, learning and development.
- 3.25 Children understand how to keep germs away by cleaning hands before and after meals. Practitioners and children know this is an important routine at mealtimes. Consistent hygiene practices meet the personal needs of all children.
- 3.26 Children learn important values, including making sure they are heard and making their own choices. They learn to care for each other within the nursery community and they notice and help when another child needs something. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Children celebrate festivals from different cultures, for example Chinese New Year, and they celebrate diversity by looking at different faces and hair colour. However, access to resources about differences are limited and not generally visible in the baby room.

Leadership and management

- 3.27 Leadership and management are good.
- 3.28 Leaders and managers adhere to shared values, policies and practices, and evaluate provision, resulting in an ambitious vision for future development. They commit to providing consistently good care and education for all children.
- 3.29 The many opportunities for practitioners to build knowledge through effective professional development translate into improvements in the children's learning experiences. These have a very positive impact on the children's outcomes. Professional development about the use of the online learning journal, provides a greater understanding of how to support children in developing their language skills. This learning is shared with parents. Regular supervisions are provided for and valued by all practitioners ensuring they feel fully supported on a daily basis.
- 3.30 Leaders and managers work closely with practitioners to ensure that all children, including those with SEND, receive effective care and education and are supported according to their needs. The effective engagement by leaders and managers with children, their parents and local services, ensures that there is good support for children with specific needs. Charities in the community are supported to help the less fortunate. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that parents believe that the setting ensures that their children learn in a safe environment.
- 3.31 Governors understand the needs of the children. They visit the Nursery, and review working practices as needed. Leaders fulfil their statutory duties competently, for example, those relating to the Equality Act 2010, the 'Prevent' strategy, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Compliance with statutory requirements

3.32 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years.

- Provide more consistent opportunities to further develop the children's use of mathematical language during regular daily activities.
- Ensure all children have access to a variety of books and resources to further enhance their learning experiences and awareness of diversity.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Vivien Sergeant	Reporting inspector
Mr Alexander Mitchell	Additional reporting inspector
Ms Carrie Askew	Compliance team inspector (Head of operations, group of IAPS schools)
Mr Shaun Wilson	Compliance team inspector (Interim bursar, IAPS school)
Mr David Collins	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head academic, IAPS school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of pre-prep, IAPS School)