



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for an Additional Inspection

Battle Abbey School

September 2021

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	560			
	Day pupils	507	Boarders	53
	EYFS	77	Juniors	111
	Seniors	263	Sixth Form	109
Date of visit	16 September 2021			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Battle Abbey School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 0 to 18. 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 and is overseen by a board of governors. Boarding is available from the age of 12. Boarders are accommodated in the boarding house in the school grounds or in one of two boarding houses situated in the town of Battle. The school has identified 86 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan. There are 45 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspections were focused compliance and educational quality inspections which took place in March 2017. The registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting was inspected by Ofsted in 2021.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2015 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 6	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 15	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission and attendance registers)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 6	Not met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 13	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11; EYFS 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 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

- 2.3 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.4 The school teaches pupils about how to keep safe and encourages them to share any concerns or worries they might have. It implements appropriate procedures for dealing with any allegations against staff that might arise and ensures that these procedures are understood by staff. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are suitably trained and provide sufficient coverage for the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They ensure that any concerns that are reported to the safeguarding team are referred to external agencies in line with current statutory guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures. The school implements an appropriate safer recruitment policy and has a suitable staff code of conduct. Governors review safeguarding appropriately, including when any safeguarding incidents arise. Having conducted such a review, they take appropriate steps to remedy any identified shortcoming. Safeguarding records show that the school implements appropriate arrangements for dealing with incidents of peer-on-peer abuse, including providing support for those involved.
- 2.5 The school does not always implement safeguarding procedures in line with statutory guidance or the practice of local safeguarding partners to act in the best interests of the child. In particular, whilst staff have received appropriate training, this is not consistently put into practice effectively. Staff have not always identified concerns as a potential safeguarding issue, or understood the need to alert the DSL of any safeguarding concerns about pupils that they might have. The school has not always ensured that parents, or their representative, are contacted when arrangements are made for pupils' accommodation after the end of a boarding period. There has been a lack of clarity in checking those put forward as representatives of parents. As a consequence, the DSL has not always been alerted to potential safeguarding concerns that have arisen in sufficient time to be able to act effectively to ensure the welfare of the pupils involved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 6]

- 2.6 The school meets the standards.
- 2.7 The school implements a suitable health and safety policy effectively. It ensures that required checks and maintenance on school premises and resources are carried out systematically. Governors conduct regular meetings to review health and safety, including in the EYFS and boarding houses. The school implements suitable measures to guard against COVID-19 in line with government guidance.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 15]

- 2.8 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.9 The school ensures the appropriate supervision of pupils during the school day and in boarding time. Staff are organised effectively through duty rotas. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that there are always staff available to support them, including during periods of remote learning. A suitable missing pupil policy is in place.
- 2.10 However, the school does not always inform itself sufficiently about arrangements made for the supervision of boarders during holiday periods. It does not always ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders, or know how to find their whereabouts, when travel arrangements have been made for them by the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – admission and attendance registers [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15]

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The school maintains admission and attendance registers appropriately.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 6]

- 2.13 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.14 The school risk assesses school resources, premises, and activities effectively. Risk assessments seen relating to these demonstrate suitable consideration of potential risks and appropriate control measures to minimise potential risks that have been identified.
- 2.15 However, the school does not always conduct and record effective risk assessments relating to pupils' safety and welfare. In particular, the school does not always risk assess effectively arrangements made for the conveyance and supervision of boarders to and at locations outside school at the end of periods of boarding.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.16 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]

- 2.17 The school does not meet the standards.
- 2.18 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management 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.
- 2.19 In particular, leaders have not always ensured that arrangements made for the conveyance and supervision of boarders at the end of periods of boarding have been suitable, or that any concerns raised about these have been acted upon. Discussions with senior leaders and governors indicate that the seriousness of the failings is understood by the school and that the school is investigating how they arose and have begun to initiate strategies to guard against similar failings in the future.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet 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 should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11

- The school must ensure that all potential safeguarding concerns are reported in line with the procedures put forward in current statutory guidance and by local agencies [paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7]
- The school must ensure that staff understand their responsibility to recognise and report any potential safeguarding concerns swiftly and in line with reporting lines identified in safeguarding training [paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.6]
- The school must ensure that it acts in the best interests of pupils by checking the veracity of those put forward as representatives of parents [paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11; EYFS 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7].

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 14; NMS 15

- The school must ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders, or know how to find their whereabouts, following travel arrangements made for them by the school at the end of periods of boarding [paragraph 14; NMS 15.5].

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, paragraph 16; NMS 6

- The school must ensure that it risk assesses effectively any arrangements made for the conveyance and supervision of boarders to and at locations outside school at the end of periods of boarding and records these assessments [paragraph 16(a) and (b); NMS 6.3]

ISSR Part 8, Quality of leadership and management, paragraph 34; NMS 13

- The proprietor must ensure that the leadership and management 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. In particular, they must monitor the effectiveness of the strategies initiated to forestall any similar failures in the future [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c); NMS 13.1 to 13.9]

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors met with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and held a discussion with the chair of governors. They talked with groups of pupils and scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.