



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Battle Abbey School

April 2023

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			
Chair of governors	Rear Admiral John Kingwell CBE			
Proprietor	BAS School Ltd			
Age range	0 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	511			
	Day pupils	469	Boarders	42
	EYFS	79	Juniors	82
	Seniors	245	Sixth Form	105
Date of inspection	20 April 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Battle Abbey School is a co-educational day and boarding school. The senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 18, is located at Battle Abbey. The prep school and nursery, which includes a registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, 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 houses in the school grounds and at Marylands, situated in the town of Battle. The school has 62 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). None has an education, health and care plan. Forty-five pupils speak English as an additional language, twenty-two of whom receive support. This inspection was focused mainly on the nursery and the senior school. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in March 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the focused compliance inspection on 31 March and 1 April 2022. In addition, the DfE requested that inspectors check the school's provision for pupils with SEND; arrangements to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying; pupil attendance; and the manner in which complaints are handled. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2(1)(b)(i) (curriculum) and 3(d) and (j) (teaching)	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 9 (behaviour) and 10 (bullying); NMS 15 and 16	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); NMS 7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS 20	Met
Part 3, paragraph 15 (admission and attendance registers)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 14	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum and teaching [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 (1)(b)(i) and paragraph 3(d) and (j)]

- 2.1 The school meets the standards.
- 2.2 A suitable written curriculum policy is implemented, supported by appropriate plans for all the required areas of learning. In the nursery, continuous provision meets the needs of each child and adult-led activities support individual children and extend their progress. Each child's progress is tracked effectively and if progress is not as expected, conversation with parents is initiated as a starting point for providing extra support. The local authority inclusion team is used to provide further guidance should an emerging SEND be identified.
- 2.3 In other sections of the school, planning takes into account the needs and aptitudes of all pupils, including those with SEND. The learning support department oversees support for pupils with additional needs. Suitably experienced staff identify barriers to pupils' learning and progress. They provide effective strategies and resources to assist such pupils and promote their smooth transition between the sections of the school. They coordinate the monitoring of progress for pupils with SEND with heads of year and pastoral staff. Teachers take into account pupils' individual needs, using information in individual pupil profiles to provide strategies to aid progress. Teachers interviewed showed a comprehensive understanding of the aptitudes and needs of their pupils. Support is obtained from external agencies, where required. Pupils report that teachers readily offer support when necessary and additional challenge when appropriate. Access arrangements are initiated, where appropriate, for public examinations.

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

Safeguarding policy

- 2.4 The school meets the requirements.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.5 The school meets the standards.
- 2.6 The school's implementation of its safeguarding policy and procedures provides appropriate support for the needs of all pupils including the boarders. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies are suitably trained and all staff receive training for their responsibilities which is updated regularly, including a monthly safeguarding newsletter. Staff understand the training they have received, such as the definitions of abuse set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022* (KCSIE). They refer their concerns to the DSL promptly. The DSL acts effectively to put in place early help, liaising promptly and appropriately with local agencies, and seeking their advice when necessary. The safeguarding team for the whole school, including the nursery and boarding, meets weekly to share concerns and confirm actions. In the nursery, staff observe children effectively to ensure they are safe, happy and secure. Children are encouraged to develop their language skills so that they can communicate their needs and feelings. Throughout the school, staff recognise the vulnerabilities of pupils with protected characteristics, including those with SEND. They are also aware of the particular needs of international boarders who are far from their families. Support is enhanced through linked academic, welfare and pastoral provision to promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Clear electronic recording enables trends and patterns in safeguarding to be noted, such as where behavioural or bullying incidents are linked

to safeguarding. Pupils confirm that they have a range of adults they trust to talk to and they also value being able to raise concerns anonymously through a safeguarding platform. They are confident that staff listen and are responsive to them. Records confirm this to be so, and that referrals are made in a timely manner. Pupils report that they feel safe in school.

- 2.7 Staff have an effective understanding of training they have received on their own code of conduct. There are suitable arrangements to report an allegation against a member of staff, including to register low level concerns. The school now makes all the checks required by KCSIE for the recruitment of staff before work begins, including checks against the list of those prohibited from teaching where relevant. It records these clearly on the single central register of appointments. Recruitment checks are now rigorously monitored by senior staff and governors. The governors, through the designated safeguarding governor, closely analyse safeguarding records to gain a clear view of emerging patterns. They receive informative updates each term and are suitably trained in safeguarding through attendance at staff training. This enables them to provide effective oversight through suitably robust review of safeguarding.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 9 and 10; NMS 15 and 16]

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.
- 2.9 Suitable policies to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying are in place and implemented effectively. The nursery adopts a positive approach, observing any triggers for poor behaviour and distracting children from any which may occur. Incidents of poor behaviour are logged and staff work together with parents to support children's behaviour where necessary. Nursery staff work with the local authority inclusion team and speech and language services to support children where there are concerns that they may show an emerging SEND. Throughout the school, effective scrutiny of detailed records of misbehaviour and unkindness or bullying enables related trends and patterns to be identified. The effectiveness of related sanctions is evaluated successfully. A suitable escalating range of sanctions allows pupils who demonstrate a low level of misbehaviour the opportunity to reflect on incidents. This is part of a restorative process undertaken before punitive sanctions are imposed. The school promotes respect for those with protected characteristics, and safeguarding implications are considered when investigating incidents. Pupils receive effective guidance on bullying and assert that it rarely occurs. Whilst they recognise the potential for misuse of social media and cyber-bullying, they report that it is also rare. Inspection evidence confirms that instances of poor online behaviour are infrequent and that the school is proactive in teaching pupils how to use the internet safely and appropriately. Pupils are confident that poor behaviour or bullying is dealt with effectively by staff. When incidents do occur, both parties are given appropriate support.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; NMS 7]

- 2.10 The school meets the standards.
- 2.11 The school has suitable arrangements for the care of pupils who are injured or unwell. Suitable numbers of staff are trained in first aid according to their responsibilities. This includes appropriate paediatric first aid training for staff in the nursery and provision of sufficient numbers of staff trained in this way. Staff are given suitable information on specific medical conditions relating to individual pupils. The school now provides appropriately to ensure pupils' medical needs at night are met in both the male and female sections of the sixth form boarding house.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]

- 2.12 The school meets the standards.
- 2.13 The school has suitable arrangements to ensure that pupils are supervised at all times. Supervision arrangements for boarding have been strengthened since the previous inspection and are equally effective, including at night. This includes supervision in the sixth form boarding house. Since the previous inspection, the whereabouts of boarders has been made readily available to staff through an effective electronic location system.

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

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 The school records pupil attendance electronically and monitors data so that any pattern of non-attendance is promptly highlighted. In the nursery, attendance is monitored effectively. Staff work with parents to amend routines where necessary, which promotes children's attendance. The school maintains suitable contact with older pupils not able to attend, including through home visits. Measures to assist a return to school include assessment of vulnerabilities and a reduced or adapted timetable when appropriate.

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.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 14]

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.
- 2.18 The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy for recording and responding to complaints. This has appropriate time scales which are adhered to unless there are unforeseen circumstances or the need for further investigation. Staff respond effectively to any initial concerns raised by parents. All formal complaints are clearly recorded with the actions taken by the school to seek resolution. Governors are regularly made aware of parental concerns.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 Leaders and governors have taken prompt and effective measures to implement the action plan following the previous inspection. As a result, those with governance, leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge and ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently and actively promote the wellbeing of pupils, including boarders.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Summary of evidence

4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the chair of governors and governor with responsibility for boarding. They visited different areas of the school, conducted a learning walk in the nursery and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspector

Mrs Jan Preece

Reporting inspector

Mrs Ros Ford

Additional Inspector