

School inspection report

31 October 2023 to 2 November 2023

Frewen College

Rye Road
Northiam
Rye
TN31 6NL

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. Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. Senior and subject leaders have been instrumental in improving the curriculum, personal development and teaching. Procedures for the evaluation of the school's effectiveness are not fully developed.
2. Governors ensure that leaders promote pupils' wellbeing effectively. They are confident, knowledgeable and skilled in supporting leaders and holding them to account for the school's effectiveness. They ensure that leaders demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities fully, so that the Standards are met.
3. Staff tailor teaching activities to pupils' likes, interests and needs effectively. As a result, pupils of all ages and abilities are well motivated and enjoy their learning. Most pupils successfully gain appropriate qualifications in a range of academic and work-related subjects. When they leave the school, pupils proceed to further or higher education, or gain apprenticeships.
4. Pupils behave well and are respectful towards each other and staff. However, sanctions for negative behaviour are not always consistently applied.
5. The premises are maintained to a suitable standard that meet health and safety requirements. Medical facilities provide appropriate accommodation for the care of pupils who are ill or injured. The number of staff who are on duty during break and lunchtimes ensure that pupils are supervised appropriately. Suitable risk assessment guidance ensures that risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated.
6. An effective personal development programme enables pupils to overcome any previous barriers to learning. Pupils demonstrate a strong empathy for the needs, feelings and circumstances of others. Pupils learn to appreciate British culture by reading, seeing and hearing literature, art and music. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to share their views and opinions or sufficient responsibility for shaping and influencing school policy.
7. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are alert to any changes in pupils' mood or demeanour and know when and how to refer their concerns. They make effective use of opportunities to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils appreciate the care and concern they receive from staff and enjoy feeling part of a 'family'.

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 staff apply the behaviour management policy consistently across the school
- strengthen leadership, management and governance by developing their evaluation of the school's effectiveness
- develop further opportunities for pupils to share their views and opinions and enable them to have a greater impact on the school community.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. The new leadership structure is having a positive impact on the school's organisation and the effective implementation of its aims, ethos and policies. Governors ensure that leaders have the knowledge and skills required to undertake their roles. Governors and leaders meet their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met consistently, and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted.
9. Subject leadership has been reorganised. This has enabled leaders to have a more effective overview of their curriculum areas and outcomes for pupils. The enhanced training and development programme introduced by leaders has been effective in improving teaching. This has been achieved through focused observations of lessons, feedback coaching for individual teachers, and specific training to strengthen teaching strategies.
10. Subject leaders are committed to adapting the curriculum so that it enhances pupils' life chances. They have developed detailed curriculum plans, which are personalised to meet each pupils' needs. In addition, leaders have introduced new qualifications that are well suited to pupils' needs. This has raised expectations and enhanced pupils' ambition.
11. Governors bring a range of skills and expertise to the role, which support the school in areas such as education, finance, health and safety and safeguarding. Governors check carefully that leaders are doing all they can to achieve the school's aims. They ask thoughtful and challenging questions of leaders to ensure that the school continues to develop and to meet the Standards.
12. Governors visit the school regularly, provide support and engage in monitoring activities. These include overseeing recruitment and safeguarding procedures, visiting lessons and speaking with pupils and staff. These visits help governors ensure that the school implements its regularly updated and suitable policies effectively.
13. Leaders respond appropriately to any concerns raised through a suitable three-stage complaints procedure. Leaders respond to complaints within the published timeframes.
14. Leaders ensure that the school provides parents and prospective parents with required information about its policies and procedures. Parents receive appropriate reports about their child's progress. For those pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, the school provides local authorities with information about how the school uses the funding it receives.
15. Leaders have developed effective systems for monitoring the school's work. Nevertheless, procedures for self-evaluation are not fully developed. For example, there is a lack of retrieval and analysis of information from different sources to enable leaders to identify trends more easily and target interventions more precisely.
16. Leaders have established a rich curriculum that is successful in developing pupils' knowledge, self-esteem and confidence. Staff encourage pupils to show respect for other people. A suitable accessibility plan is in place, which ensures that appropriate premises and curriculum adaptations are made to meet pupils' needs. For example, pupils can access specialist classrooms when appropriate. Staff understand well that they provide a model of social behaviour for pupils to emulate and that they should avoid bringing their personal views into their teaching.

17. Leaders ensure that appropriate risk assessments, including those taking account of the school's rural setting, are in place. This ensures that risks that may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Staff demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of pupils' individual and additional needs, and are alert to any changes in pupils' mood or behaviour. This helps pupils to enjoy their time at the school and engage well in their learning.
19. Leaders have designed an effective curriculum that covers all the required areas of learning. It is sufficiently flexible to consider pupils' enthusiasms and needs. As a result, pupils develop their skills and talents and achieve well in their academic and vocational studies. Leaders listen to pupils' requests to study diverse subjects and include these where possible. Pupils develop experience and skills for life through subjects such as bushcraft and digital skills. Pupils appreciate the support that they receive academically and personally.
20. In Year 11, pupils complete GCSE, functional skills and/or entry-level qualifications in English and mathematics. They also study GCSE or equivalent courses in art, design and technology, drama, geography, history, hospitality and catering, music, physical education (PE), travel and tourism and science. In 2023, pupils achieved particularly well in creative subjects and history in comparison to their starting points. Results were not as high for those subjects where there is particular emphasis on technical vocabulary. Comparison of the number and range of qualifications shows a trend of increasing success in the last two years.
21. In the sixth form, pupils successfully complete and generally attain above average standards in academic A levels or vocational courses, which, for the current cohort, include art and design, business studies, childcare, e-sport, equine studies, horticulture, information and communication technology (ICT), media and sport, music, performing arts and uniformed services.
22. Teachers take pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) into account so that classroom activities are well planned. Pupils develop a secure bank of knowledge and skills. Teaching strategies enable pupils to access the curriculum and to make good progress. For example, teachers ask probing questions based on their knowledge of pupils' achievement and needs. They give pupils sufficient time to think carefully and so deepen their understanding. Teachers deploy a range of stimulating sensory resources to enable pupils to access the curriculum.
23. An effective framework is used to check pupils' progress. Leaders quickly establish pupils' starting points. This information, together with standardised tests and detailed tracking of pupils' learning, enables staff to identify any gaps and target appropriate support. Leaders also use the information in pupils' EHC plans to set appropriately demanding targets. They identify the small steps that pupils need to embed their learning.
24. Pupils' learning is enhanced through effective verbal and written feedback from teachers. Feedback is adapted to meet pupils' individual needs, such as in the assessment grids used in art sketchbooks. This personalised approach helps pupils to understand which precise actions are needed to improve their work and enables them to achieve well.
25. Leaders provide a comprehensive extra-curricular programme. Pupils engage well in a variety of activities ranging from film club to gaming and from art to science revision clubs. They achieve well in these areas because staff provide a positive environment and give pupils the support they need to learn effectively and to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

26. Leaders have established a comprehensive personal development programme, which includes relationships and sex education. Through this pupils develop a mature awareness of issues related to adolescence. These include strategies for navigating new social situations and keeping safe in personal relationships. Staffs' nurturing approach enables pupils to feel valued as individuals. Pupils benefit from staff guidance, which enables them to regulate their feelings and to balance their emotions throughout the day. As a result, pupils acquire a variety of strategies that helps them to develop self-knowledge and self-confidence.
27. Pupils learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including by getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. Leaders ensure that pupils receive broad experience of physical activities, including games and sports.
28. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the spiritual and moral aspects of life, often expressed in art and music as well as an appreciation of nature. Pupils understand how the personal challenges they have encountered can have a profound effect upon their sense of what is important in life. As a result, they are respectful of each other's feelings and perceptions. Throughout the day, pupils are able to reflect on their feelings and the beauty of nature. This has a positive impact on their mental and emotional wellbeing.
29. Overall, leaders and staff implement the school's behaviour management policy effectively. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. However, there is some inconsistency in how the sanctions for negative behaviour are applied, which some pupils perceive as being unfair. Pupils show courtesy and respect towards each other and staff. Leaders maintain suitable records of behaviour and bullying incidents, which are recorded systematically and in detail. Pupils demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the different types of bullying, including those that can occur verbally and online. Pupils learn about how the choices they make now may shape how successful they are in the future.
30. The curriculum builds in opportunities for pupils to learn about and develop positive behaviours. For example, staff plan tasks and activities that teach pupils about how to work together and to wait their turn so that everyone can contribute. Pupils regularly use techniques that restore their concentration so that they can return to their studies with renewed enthusiasm and energy. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to share their views and opinions. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to suggest changes and influence the development of the school.
31. Leaders ensure that suitable accommodation and procedures are in place for the care of pupils who are unwell or who require medical attention. Staff are regularly trained in first aid. Detailed records are kept of any medical incidents or consultations. Medicines are stored securely. First-aid kits are readily available in locations around the school.
32. Staff are on duty at break and lunchtimes at various key locations around the school site, so that pupils are supervised appropriately throughout the school day. Meticulous and effective arrangements are in place for the arrival and departure of pupils at the beginning and end of each school day.

33. Suitable admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored appropriately. Leaders ensure that health and safety laws and fire safety requirements are implemented effectively, promoting a safe environment for pupils to learn in. Recordkeeping is thorough and shows that there is effective overview of health and safety procedures.
34. The school's premises are secure and maintained to a suitable level of hygiene and safety. Hazardous materials, such as those used by cleaners and technicians, are stored securely. Suitable risk assessment guidance ensures that risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

35. Leaders effectively promote an ethos of respect, kindness and an awareness of others' feelings and needs. The school's core values of collaboration and respect are at the heart of its assembly and personal development programme. The curriculum successfully promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs which are fundamental to life in Britain. It is successful in developing pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence, helping them to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils willingly take opportunities to contribute to the lives of others. They gain knowledge of and respect for public institutions in England. Pupils display a mature appreciation of diversity and cultures other than their own, including by reading literature, and through the art and music they learn about.
36. Pupils have strong knowledge and understanding about what the school terms the 'characteristics' that make individuals special and about the different types of relationships and partnerships. Pupils are tolerant of, and celebrate, each other's differences. They have open discussions about disability, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and religion.
37. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to experience and contribute towards the community beyond the school gates. Pupils respond readily to the staff's teaching and nurturing approaches, which encourages effective social communication. For example, pupils enthusiastically undertake litter picking in the nearby village and make contributions to the local foodbank. They contribute towards fundraising for charities based in the United Kingdom and overseas, which promotes their understanding of money and finance. These activities also enable pupils to develop a strong awareness of social responsibility. As a result, they appreciate that anyone may encounter difficulties in their lives and empathise particularly with those less fortunate than themselves.

Leaders ensure the effective provision of specialist careers advice. This includes helpful individual guidance as to the most appropriate examination and career pathways to take. As a result, pupils understand that the choices that they make now are likely to affect their ambitions for their future lives. Sixth-form pupils attend a local college where they study a variety of vocational courses. They benefit from mixing with a different group of peers in a larger setting, which helps them make well-informed decisions about their next steps. As a result of these measures, pupils take up a variety of courses, including at college and university, with some entering the workplace through apprenticeships. The school prepares pupils effectively for life in British society.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

38. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders have ensured that all staff are appropriately trained and know how to recognise and report any concerns that they may have. A clear process is in place for staff to follow. When concerns arise, leaders respond in a timely and appropriate way.
39. Staff know the pupils very well. This enables them to quickly spot any changes in pupils' behaviour or demeanour that could signal a concern.
40. Safeguarding leaders act promptly whenever concerns are raised. They maintain meticulous records of any concerns about pupils and the subsequent actions taken in response to these.
41. Pupils' ongoing safety is prioritised through the curriculum. Pupils learn how to stay safe online by being alert to potential scamming, not giving out their personal information and being aware of the dangers of misusing social networking sites. They also understand the importance of communicating with adults when they feel worried or upset about something that has happened online. Leaders ensure that robust filtering and monitoring systems are in place so that pupils are protected from potential online safety risks.
42. Leaders have established effective partnership working with external agencies, including the local authorities that commission places at the school. This enables leaders to draw on specialist advice and guidance, when required, to ensure that the school is a place where pupils are safe.
43. Leaders and governors ensure that appropriate pre-employment checks are completed and recorded in line with current statutory guidance.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Frewen College
Department for Education number	845/6002
Registered charity number	307019
Address	Frewen College Rye Road Northiam Rye TN31 6NL
Email address	office@frewencollege.co.uk
Website	frewencollege.co.uk
Proprietor	The Frewen Educational Trust Ltd
Chair	Mr John Stevenson
Headteacher	Mr Nick Goodman
Age range	7 to 19
Number of pupils	131
Number of boarding pupils	28
Date of previous inspection	1 to 2 May 2019

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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