

School inspection report

11 to 13 March 2025

Battle Abbey School

High Street

Battle

East Sussex

TN33 0AD

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. Governors maintain oversight of the school's operations through regular meetings with leaders and scrutiny of reports and data. However, governors have not ensured that leaders fully implement statutory guidance regarding school attendance in a timely manner. This means that leaders do not consistently promote the wellbeing of pupils.
2. The school's website provides a range of useful information for parents and pupils. At the time of inspection, some of the required information was out of date. This was rectified during the inspection.
3. Leaders ensure that careers guidance is available to help sixth-form pupils prepare for higher education. For example, staff offer enrichment sessions, individual meetings and an online careers application. However, leaders do not ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of how to access this advice, meaning that some pupils do not have the confidence or knowledge to help them make decisions regarding their life beyond school.
4. Leaders make use of detailed data and regular observations to evaluate the school's effectiveness. The views of parents and pupils are taken into account through regular surveys and pupil panels. Where areas for development are identified, rapid action is taken, for instance in recent changes to relationships and sex education in the sixth form. This is having a positive impact on pupils.
5. The curriculum throughout the school nurtures aspiration and develops pupils' knowledge and skills across a full range of experiences. Staff in the early years promote learning in all areas of the curriculum. Mathematical and literacy skills are well taught throughout the school in dedicated lessons and also woven throughout the curriculum. Lessons and opportunities for cross-curricular learning throughout the school develop pupils' creative, scientific and technological skills.
6. Teachers form positive relationships with pupils and support them in their intellectual endeavours. A systematic framework for assessment enables teachers and leaders to monitor pupils' progress and provide support and challenge as necessary. Pupils make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with effective support in lessons and in extra sessions as necessary.
7. Leaders create a supportive and caring environment which fosters a sense of belonging in the pupils. Beginning in the Reception class, staff have clear expectations of pupils and apply these consistently to create a calm and respectful environment within the school. Any rare instances of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with effectively.
8. Boarding staff ensure that the boarding houses provide pupils with a homely environment in which they are supported during the evenings and weekends. Boarders form positive relationships with the boarding staff and each other. As they move through the school, boarders are encouraged to develop their independence, for instance in managing their evening time effectively, balancing study with recreation.
9. Leaders embed their expectation that pupils value service throughout school life. Pupils support their peers and take part in mentoring programmes. Pupils participate in events with the local community, particularly in the wide range of choirs and ensembles which combine with local groups for performances.

10. Leaders have put in place effective procedures for many aspects of safeguarding. Regular training ensures that staff are aware of their responsibilities, including in the early years. Staff act quickly and appropriately if they have a concern. Leaders liaise effectively with local agencies to support pupils where necessary. Appropriate safeguarding recruitment checks are carried out on adults and recorded accurately. However, the school has not fully implemented the latest statutory guidance with respect to attendance and therefore does not consistently promote the welfare of pupils.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.

Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and
- they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- the statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)* is fully implemented in order to support the welfare and safeguarding of pupils.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the school's website includes up-to-date versions of all required information so that it gives a clear and accurate picture of the school
- extend the sixth form enrichment programme for pupils so that they are well informed when making choices about life beyond school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Governors and leaders have a clear, shared vision for the school based around a caring ethos and academic aspiration. Governors monitor the school's operations through regular reports and presentations which leaders provide and which are considered at formal meetings. However, governors have not ensured that leaders have implemented revised statutory guidance on attendance in a timely manner.
12. Governors scrutinise safeguarding records and identify trends, assuring themselves that leaders have taken suitable action to support individuals and identify any themes. Governors are proactive in making additional resources available to promote the wellbeing of pupils where necessary, for instance in recent reorganisation of staffing to provide pupils with additional support.
13. Leaders take a strategic approach to school development and have embedded the values of belonging, aspiration and service throughout the school. There is a particular emphasis on involving all stakeholders in strategic development, for instance by running regular 'pupil panels' on specific issues. By engaging pupils and parents effectively, leaders are aware of the needs of the community and are able to ensure that change has a positive impact.
14. Leaders with responsibility for the early years have a clear understanding of the children's needs. They monitor the early years provision effectively and ensure that all the early years requirements are met. They understand the need to manage risk and implement dynamic risk assessments when needed, for instance for children with allergies.
15. Leaders with responsibility for boarding have a clear understanding of the needs of their boarding pupils. By focusing on open dialogue with the pupils and prioritising pupils' wellbeing they ensure that boarders are well cared for.
16. Leaders monitor the quality of education throughout the school carefully and work closely with heads of department to ensure that pupils make good progress. Regular learning walks and detailed scrutiny of assessment data mean that leaders have a clear overview of the effectiveness of teaching in the school. They use this to plan an effective programme of staff training to maintain the high quality of delivery.
17. Leaders have a well-developed understanding of the risks facing their pupils. A rigorous process of risk assessment is in place and action to mitigate these is embedded in all areas of school life. Staff in the school are aware of any vulnerable pupils. Recent changes to the safeguarding team have further extended the school's capacity to support these pupils. Where necessary, leaders work effectively with local agencies to support individual pupils or to respond to any emerging areas of concern in the local area.
18. Leaders have put in place a comprehensive accessibility plan which considers a range of potential barriers to learning and aims to create an inclusive environment for all pupils. This informs all aspects of school development, including staff training and premises development. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
19. Parents receive regular reports about their child's progress, attitudes and attainment. The school's website contains a wide range of useful information. At the time of inspection, some of the required information on the school's website was out of date. This was remedied during the inspection.

20. Leaders manage parental complaints appropriately and keep detailed records. Boarders know how to raise any concerns they may have. Appropriate action is taken in response to these. Governors and leaders monitor the records of complaints carefully and are quick to take action in response to any lessons learned.

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

21. The standards are not met consistently as leaders have not implemented all statutory guidance in a timely manner.
- 22. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

23. Leaders have designed and implemented a broad curriculum, which demonstrates high levels of aspiration for pupils. Throughout the school, leaders have placed an emphasis on developing pupils' interdisciplinary skills by including cross-curricular projects and themes within the curriculum. Pupils develop a wide-ranging interest in their studies and value their learning.
24. In the Reception class, leaders have designed a varied curriculum which covers all areas of development. The curriculum ensures that children gain the communication and language skills needed to transition smoothly to Year 1, for instance through the structured scheme which teaches the sounds that letters make. Staff plan learning opportunities which encourage children to engage actively and creatively, for instance identifying craters on the moon and then imagining alien life. Older pupils in the prep school develop problem-solving skills in science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM) lessons. These lessons support pupils in combining creativity with technical and scientific approaches.
25. The senior school curriculum effectively prepares pupils for GCSEs and A Levels. Leaders have thought creatively about the curriculum, for instance providing options for pupils to sit mathematics GCSE exams early so that they can then choose from a range of subsequent options to study. Pupils achieve above the national average at GCSE and A level.
26. Throughout the curriculum, leaders develop pupils' ability to think and learn for themselves. Children in the early years are able to initiate their own learning, for instance by making potions in the outdoor area. In the prep school, pupils explore environmental issues in beach and outdoor learning activities, as well as learning a range of outdoor skills. Older pupils are often set short research tasks, and many older pupils produce creative and intellectually rigorous work for the extended project qualification (EPQ).
27. Teachers know their pupils well and this forms the basis of a highly effective approach to teaching and learning. Teachers prepare resources which are adapted to the pupils' ages and current levels of understanding. They challenge pupils to extend their learning through progressively more challenging tasks and provide individual support for those who need it. Teachers make particularly effective use of questioning to deepen pupils' understanding as well as to develop their speaking and listening skills.
28. Literacy is embedded across the curriculum. In the prep school, teachers take opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary, asking for synonyms regularly in lessons. Teachers give older pupils support on structuring their writing across their subjects, giving pupils the knowledge and skills to write extended prose with precision. The mathematics curriculum is delivered by teachers who are highly knowledgeable about their subject. Lessons are delivered effectively, and teachers provide individual help, which ensures that pupils build their skills and confidence in the subject.
29. There is a focus on inclusion within the school and teachers meet pupils' individual needs effectively. Leaders have put in place a framework for identifying pupils who have SEND. Where necessary, pupils are provided with effective support in lessons through the use of additional resources or the appropriate deployment of teaching assistants.
30. Leaders have put in place effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Teachers use an inclusive approach combining class support and additional one to one tuition

for those who require it. Leaders monitor the progress of this group of pupils carefully and intervene rapidly should any pupil require additional support.

31. Leaders have implemented a school-wide assessment framework to monitor pupils' progress. This is used by heads of department to identify pupils who would benefit from additional support, which is then implemented. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and provide clear feedback to them. As a result, pupils know their current level of attainment and what they need to do to improve. Regular written reports and annual parents' meetings keep parents informed about their child's progress.
32. Pupils have access to a range of recreational activities which broaden their experience beyond the academic curriculum. Boarders take part in a range of activities and trips at the weekends, for instance visiting Cambridge to explore the city and university. Older pupils develop their engineering skills in competitions such as F1 in Schools and experiments in forensics and rocketry. Regular school productions and concerts provide opportunities for pupils at all ages to develop their creative and performing skills.

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

- 33. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

34. Leaders have created a supportive and caring community to promote belonging. Staff set high expectations for how pupils should treat each other. This leads to a calm environment throughout the school which encourages pupils to participate positively in school life. These positive interactions foster high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence in the pupils.
35. Leaders have not implemented the latest statutory guidance to improve school attendance. The school is using outdated attendance codes, does not have an attendance champion and has not updated its policy to provide parents with the required information. However, leaders liaise effectively with parents and the local authority to support pupils at risk of low attendance. The admissions register is appropriate, and staff make timely notifications to the local authority when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard times.
36. In the Reception class, staff interactions with the children are gentle and respectful which promotes caring relationships with the children. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and this fosters a calm ethos in the classroom. The effective use of the rewards system instils a sense of pride in the children for their achievements.
37. Staff implement clear and effective policies regarding pupils' behaviour and the prevention of bullying. Any rare instances of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Careful records of any incidents are retained and leaders adapt the curriculum to respond to any incidents or emerging trends, including those involving any racism or sexism. Staff are careful to note any incidents which involve boarders and provide additional support if necessary.
38. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons help pupils understand how to keep healthy and develop positive relationships throughout the school. For older pupils they include all the statutory requirements on relationships and sex education (RSE). The curriculum for relationships education in Year 12 has recently been updated in response to pupils' feedback. It is well matched to the needs of pupils, giving them a solid understanding of the characteristics of positive relationships. Other aspects of health education are integrated throughout the curriculum, for instance learning about the risks of performance-enhancing drugs in physical education lessons.
39. A wide range of opportunities for physical education are in place throughout the school. Children in the Reception year develop their balance and co-ordination through physical activities. Older pupils develop motor skills and an understanding of fitness in lessons and enjoy opportunities to compete in team sports such as netball, hockey and football. The sports scholars programme provides opportunities for aspiring athletes to develop their fitness and gain national qualifications, such as the England Hockey 'In2Hockey' award. Staff encourage pupils to engage in recreational sports at lunchtime and after school, enabling them to find activities they enjoy.
40. Religious studies lessons and assemblies help pupils to develop their spiritual knowledge. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of a range of different faiths and enable them to explore faith and secular viewpoints in lessons and extra-curricular societies.
41. Staff provide a range of opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. Throughout the school, pupils elect representatives to the school council. Older pupils in the prep and senior schools take on

roles which give them appropriate responsibilities in different areas of school life such as science ambassadors and heads of house. These opportunities develop pupils' self-confidence and independence.

42. Staff are available in all areas of the school site throughout the day. They ensure effective supervision of pupils and support any pupils who may appear unhappy or unwell, including by providing first-aid treatment. There are effective procedures for signing in and out of boarding accommodation. Boarding staff are available throughout the evening and overnight, and boarders are confident in how to access staff out of hours.
43. Leaders have developed a culture where health and safety is seen as a priority. A programme of frequent inspections of premises, including boarding houses, ensures they are well maintained. An effective reporting system is well used by staff and pupils. An appropriate fire risk assessment is in place and regular fire drills are carried out, including overnight in the boarding houses.
44. There are appropriate medical facilities available to look after pupils who become unwell, including boarders. Suitably trained staff are available at all times of the day and night and pupils have access to the school counsellor. As a result, pupils have appropriate support for their physical and mental health needs.
45. The boarding staff know the pupils in their care well and play an essential role supporting boarders' wellbeing and personal development. Boarders develop a sense of community and socialise freely in their boarding houses. They are supported to develop independence as they move through the school. The induction for boarders instils mutual respect for each other and pupils form friendships in their houses across age groups.

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

46. Standards are not met consistently as the register of pupils' attendance is not completed in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- 47. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

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

48. Leaders promote service as a core value for the community and this is integrated into pupils' lives at the school. This begins when older pupils support younger pupils through the mentoring programme. Each school house organises student-led charity events, such as visiting care homes or raising money. A high level of participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme means that many of the older students volunteer within the local area.
49. Life skills lessons in the prep school introduce pupils to handling money, for instance the importance of saving and spending wisely. PSHE lessons in the senior school provide further opportunities for pupils to learn about more advanced concepts, such as investments. Fund raising for charity is also used as an opportunity for financial discussions. For instance, pupils compare the value of a donation in the United Kingdom to its value to the recipients.
50. Teachers in the early years develop the children's social interactions through positive modelling and consistent expectations. Pupils show care and respect for each other. They understand the need to treat everyone fairly and provide encouragement to each other, for instance when learning how to roll playdough into different shapes.
51. Careers guidance is offered in the senior school in enrichment sessions and this is supplemented by careers fairs, online resources and information on university finance. However, some pupils in the sixth form are unclear about how to access this guidance effectively and they are less confident about preparing for living independently after school.
52. Communal singing plays an important role in the life of the school and often involves the wider community. Pupils in the prep school all sing in the choir and take part in a variety of local festivals. The senior choir also operates at a high standard and combines with the local choral society for major performances. Pupils gain an appreciation for their local community and the wider arts culture in the country.
53. British values are integrated into the curriculum and teachers engage pupils in discussions prompted by examples from literature and history. For instance, pupils learning about classical civilisations discuss democracy in ancient Greece, particularly with respect to the rights of women. Pupils also reflect on recent events with their tutors, for instance discussing the right to strike and freedom of speech.
54. Leaders utilise the curriculum effectively to develop pupils' understanding of a range of different cultures around the world. Pupils learn about different religious celebrations and mark these festivals in school. A range of clubs and societies give pupils the opportunity to discuss and experience events from around the world, often combining these with language learning or a historical perspective. Visiting speakers provide a diverse range of perspectives in after school talks and assemblies.

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

55. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

56. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have implemented a robust safeguarding culture within the school. This culture is based on an attitude of openness and willingness to raise concerns amongst staff and pupils. However, the school has not fully implemented the latest statutory guidance with respect to attendance and therefore has not consistently promoted the welfare of pupils.
57. The whole-school safeguarding lead oversees a safeguarding team who each have responsibility for different age ranges within the school. Leaders are aware of the particular vulnerability of groups such as boarders. These leaders meet regularly to review individual cases and identify any trends across the school. This allows for the pooling of knowledge, and where any trends are identified, effective action is taken, for instance by supporting individual groups or developing resources to be delivered through assemblies or the PSHE programme.
58. A comprehensive staff training programme ensures that staff understand the principles of safeguarding and their own roles. Safeguarding leaders take part in training with local and national organisations and as a result are aware of risks which may affect their pupils. All staff undertake suitable training to help them identify safeguarding concerns and they know the appropriate steps to take when they have concerns. Leaders undertake additional training where pupils have particular safeguarding needs, enabling staff to support pupils effectively.
59. Staff maintain detailed records of their concerns about pupils, and this enables leaders to monitor individuals carefully and ensure they are receiving appropriate support. Leaders understand local thresholds and use these to make decisions around the level of support to provide to pupils. Where necessary, leaders work effectively with the local authority and other relevant agencies to safeguard pupils and protect them from harm.
60. Lessons on how to stay safe are integrated into the curriculum, particularly in PSHE lessons, assemblies and form time. Pupils know that they can raise any concerns with members of staff. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and understand the risks, for instance of public messaging platforms. Pupils, including boarders, have suitably filtered and monitored access to the internet. Safeguarding leaders respond quickly to any concerning internet use and the system is subject to regular testing.
61. The procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff working in the school are effective and all checks are accurately recorded.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

62. The Standards relating to safeguarding are not all met as the school has not fully implemented the statutory guidance around improving school attendance.
- 63. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

Schedule of unmet Standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR ¹ Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
NMS ² 2.1	The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
NMS 2.2	The school's leadership and management, including its governing body where appropriate, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, appropriate to their role and undertake appropriate training as required.
NMS 2.4	The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met.
NMS 2.5	The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

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

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

¹ The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

² National Minimum Standards for boarding schools ('NMS')

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 8	Where section 87(1) of the Children Act 1989 applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
8(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
8(b)	such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Children under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
NMS 8.1	The school should ensure that: • arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and • such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The quality of the early years foundation stage in the registered early years provision

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

64. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
65. Leaders have an ambitious vision for how they want children to learn, and children benefit from meaningful experiences across the setting. Staff are skilled at developing relationships with the children that are sensitive and responsive. They build secure and caring bonds allowing them to effectively meet the needs of the children. For example, offering reassurance when it is needed. Children are emotionally secure and show great confidence and independence for their age. They actively engage in a wide variety of activities. Children happily choose resources and initiate their own learning, such as when they ask for string and paper to make a pirate eyepatch.
66. Overall, children show high levels of engagement and concentration as they remain interested in their play for sustained periods, such as when building a marble run. Children make good progress from their starting points and are supported to be ready for the next stage in their education. Staff are adept at questioning children to develop their skills and understanding when they are engaged in an activity. However, sometimes the long-term sequence of curriculum milestones is less clear.
67. The safeguarding and welfare requirements are met and there is a shared understanding and responsibility for protecting children.

Quality of education

68. The quality of education is good.
69. Leaders are knowledgeable about how young children learn. They successfully organise a stimulating environment to promote all areas of the curriculum. Leaders support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. For example, they swiftly create and implement support plans when needed. Staff ensure resources are designed to challenge the children and encourage good progress. For instance, children demonstrate secure gross motor skills when riding the tricycles. However, on rare occasions during transition times, such as teatime, staff focus on routine tasks and use this time less effectively to support learning.
70. Children communicate effectively for their age and are confident in their exchanges with each other and with adults. For example, when explaining the process of how to plant a seed, they talk about making a hole in the compost, pushing the seed down, covering it and then watering it. Staff interactions are purposeful and effectively move the children's learning forward, such as during snack time when staff reinforce mathematical concepts of number and shape.
71. Staff successfully support children to develop higher order thinking skills by asking questions and encouraging them to find their own solutions. For instance, staff encourage children to experiment to find out how to ensure the marble reaches the bottom of the marble run. Staff have a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge children should learn at a given point in time. However, they are less secure about the ongoing sequence of learning.

Behaviour and attitudes

72. Behaviour and attitudes are good.
73. Children are motivated and arrive happy and ready to learn. For instance, older babies enter the room smiling and swiftly join in activities, such as exploring the marks that vehicles dipped in paint make on a paper ramp. Overall, children show positive attitudes to their play with high levels of curiosity and concentration. Staff have high expectations of children. They understand their individual needs and respond appropriately. For example, they provide gentle encouragement as babies who are initially reserved, lurch forward to explore paint with their hands.
74. Children's behaviour is positive. Children are effective at managing their own feelings and show an advanced awareness of the feelings of others. Staff spend time with children talking about behaviour choices and modelling expectations. Children can share and co-operate with one another and understand the need to wait and take turns. For instance, children approach their friends and say, 'I can share, can I play with you?'. They have a clear understanding of the expectations and respond promptly to staff requests and instructions.
75. Children are highly engaged in their chosen activities. They are determined and ambitious about what they want to achieve, such as when making a maze with string. Children are resilient when things do not go as planned. They do not immediately seek help and show good critical thinking skills, such as when they work out that the bubble machine needed more mixture to work.

Personal development

76. The personal development of children is good.
77. Staff maintain an effective key-person system, which helps children to build secure attachments. Staff know the children extremely well and respond effectively to their needs and individual characters. For instance, staff recognise when children require reassurance, food and sleep and they respond to these needs swiftly. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the relationships children build with staff.
78. Children show confidence and independence when moving around the rooms and selecting resources. They are successful at initiating their own learning. Staff allow the children to take risks but are there to support when needed, such as when balancing on the stepping stones. Children solve problems, such as when they find their missing Wellington boot when dressing to go outdoors. Younger children demonstrate well-developed fine motor skills as they grasp spoons and feed themselves a snack. Staff promote opportunities for children to be active and children benefit from healthy and nutritious food.
79. Staff help children to address their personal needs. For example, children learn to wash their hands competently and recognise when they need to manage their own personal hygiene. Staff encourage children to understand the needs of others and contribute positively to society by being actively involved in charity fundraising. The older children also take responsibility for looking after the settings' guinea pigs. Staff encourage children to be respectful towards one another and to respect each other's achievements. Children automatically celebrate each other's success. For example, clapping when they roll a paint-covered ball down the ramp.

Leadership and management

80. Leadership and management are good.
81. Leaders clearly articulate their ambitious vision to provide high-quality, inclusive care and education for all children in the setting. Leaders are enthusiastic about the education of young children and work hard to establish their vision in practice. All leaders involved in the setting have evaluated their provision and have ongoing plans in place to support improvement. For example, they have effectively implemented their recruitment and training plan and have identified plans to maximise use of outdoor spaces. They are supported by an early years governor who regularly visits the setting.
82. There is a strong emphasis on supporting staff to further develop their knowledge and understanding through effective training. Leaders ensure that children are fully supported to access the curriculum, and adjustments are made as necessary. For example, they put support plans in place to help develop speech and language skills.
83. Leaders ensure that effective systems are in place for the supervision and support of staff. Leaders positively engage with staff and understand the pressures that are on them. Leaders successfully engage with parents, such as through regular communications and special events.
84. During the inspection, leaders reviewed and implemented protocols to ensure that temperatures in the baby room are consistently maintained.

Safeguarding

85. Safeguarding is effective.
86. Leaders have effective oversight of safeguarding. They ensure staff receive regular training. There are robust systems in place for accidents and incidents. Complaints are managed effectively and procedures are reviewed and amended, as necessary. Any requirement to notify Ofsted when circumstances change is completed in a timely manner. Leaders ensure risk assessments are in place and followed by staff.
87. Staff have a thorough understanding of signs and symptoms of abuse and they are familiar with procedures should they need to refer any potential concern about children. Leaders are aware of the external agencies that they should liaise with should the need arise.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- support staff to fully understand the curriculum milestones to help them sequence and extend children's learning
- ensure that staff make the most of the opportunities for learning during transition times.

The extent to which the school meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage

88. The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

School details

School	Battle Abbey School
Department for Education number	845/6018
Registered early years number	EY559865
Registered charity number	306998
Address	Battle Abbey School High Street Battle East Sussex TN33 0AD
Phone number	01424 772385
Email address	office@battleabbeyschool.com
Website	https://www.battleabbeyschool.com
Proprietor	BAS (SCHOOL) Limited
Chair	Rear Admiral John Kingwell CBE JP DL
Headteacher	Mrs Hannah Blake
Age range	Three months to 18
Number of pupils	473
Number of boarding pupils	31
Number of children in the early years registered setting	52
Date of previous inspection	30 March to 1 April 2022

Information about the school

89. 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 foundations 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. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
90. Boarding is available in the senior school from the age of 11. Boarders are accommodated in two boarding houses in the school grounds and at Maryland's, situated in the town of Battle.
91. There are ten children in the early years, comprising a single reception class. There is also a separate early years setting which is registered with Ofsted for children from the age of three months to four years.
92. The school has identified 92 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
93. The school has identified English as an additional language for 22 pupils.
94. The school states its aims are to be a small family school with high-quality pastoral care and strong academic results where each child is valued. It seeks to inspire pupils to strive for excellence while recognising their achievements according to their unique strengths and interests. The school aims to promote balanced social development and prepare pupils for life beyond school through warm and sensitive pastoral care within a structured day and boarding environment.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

11 to 13 March 2025

95. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

96. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

97. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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