

ISP School Battle

Glengorse Estate, Glengorse, Battle TN33 0TX

Inspection dates

27 July 2021

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)–2(2)(i)

- The school aims to offer 'a safe, calm and nurturing learning environment in which pupils are supported to reach their potential'. Leaders are ambitious that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) should be supported and enabled to achieve as well as other pupils wherever possible.
- The subjects the school will offer are likely to cover the breadth of learning required by the independent school standards. These subjects include English, mathematics, science, art, history, geography, physical education, computing and food technology. Some of these subjects may be taught together as part of themes or 'topics'. There is a prominent place for phonics, early reading and personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- The proprietor has ensured that a curriculum policy and plans are in place. At the time of the previous pre-registration inspection, leaders had not produced detailed plans that set out what pupils will be taught throughout the year (schemes of work). This has now been fully rectified. Curriculum plans set out the detail of what will be taught across all subjects so that it is clear how pupils' learning will develop over time. Curriculum plans provide a secure framework for teaching.

Paragraph 3–3(j), 4

- The proprietor plans to employ qualified and experienced teachers only. New starters will be subject to a probation period before their appointment is confirmed. Leaders will provide support and training for teachers. The proprietor's director of education believes strongly that supporting staff will help them, in turn, do their best for pupils. Leaders plan a system of performance management, including observing teachers and providing feedback. The intention is to create an open culture where teachers meet regularly to share practice and ideas.
- Leaders have devised a framework for assessing pupils' progress. They have chosen to prioritise assessing how pupils' skills are developing using school-devised 'steps assessments'. Assessment will also take account of targets in pupils' education, health

and care (EHC) plans. Leaders are keen to involve parents and carers as much as possible in their child's education and have thoughtful plans about how to succeed.

- It is likely that all the standards in this part will be met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- The school wishes to offer a 'holistic, therapeutic' approach to education. Leaders are keen to enable pupils to thrive by promoting positive relationships, self-discipline, self-esteem and resilience.
- Leaders are very mindful of the complex needs and situations of likely prospective pupils. They are experienced in working with pupils who have experienced trauma and who may only be able to show how they feel through their actions. Leaders see developing pupils emotionally and socially as an essential component to enable successful academic learning.
- To support pupils' personal development, there will be a focus on helping them to recognise and understand their feelings, giving pupils the strategies to respond and the words to communicate these. Proposed behaviour management approaches are grounded in helping pupils understand the concepts of 'reflection' and 'repair' when things have gone wrong. Adults will be trained to understand this cycle of managing behaviour and about how to coach pupils to operate successfully as 'citizens in a world that can be difficult'.
- Part of leaders' vision is the determination to remove 'life-limiting barriers'. Leaders expect that many prospective pupils will likely feel used to being excluded from many experiences, either because of their previous conduct or their own anxieties. The school plans an array of trips, visitors, activities and experiences to help overcome these obstacles.
- The promotion of British values will likely be embedded through the school's work and ethos. These principles will also be taught directly, for example through PSHE. Leaders plan to convene a school council with representatives from each class and involve pupils in appointing new staff.
- It is likely that the standard in this part will be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b)

- The proposed safeguarding policy is informed by the latest statutory guidance. It sets out suitable arrangements for training staff, including at the point of induction. Detailed sections within the policy set out a wide range of specific risks and considerations which may affect pupils' safety or welfare.
- Leaders speak readily and confidently about the challenges of safeguarding pupils with SEND and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The proprietor and leaders have much experience running other provisions for pupils with similar needs to those likely to be offered a place in the school.

- Leaders will use an online system for record-keeping. The safeguarding policy has been updated since the last inspection to reflect the school's intended practice.
- Leaders have made contact with local safeguarding leaders. They understand local arrangements with other agencies for working together to safeguard pupils.
- The recently appointed headteacher is now named as the designated safeguarding lead in the safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website. She has completed the required designated safeguarding lead training.

Paragraphs 9–9(c), 10

- If implemented consistently and effectively, the proposed behaviour and anti-bullying policies, strategies and procedures are likely to help leaders to achieve their aims.
- The behaviour policy sets out the positive ethos and culture which leaders wish to create. It includes lists of both rewards and sanctions which are reasonable and fair. The policy places a helpful focus on the types of behaviour that will help or prevent pupils from learning well.
- The anti-bullying policy sums up the school's belief and intended approach for pupils and parents by stating: 'The ISP School Battle believes pupils have the right to feel safe and happy. Bullying of any kind undermines these rights and makes life miserable for all those affected.' The policy takes a firm stance that any form of bullying is 'entirely unacceptable' and 'must be dealt with firmly, swiftly and carefully'.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16–16(b)

- Suitable health and safety, first-aid and risk assessment policies are in place and likely to be fit for purpose. A variety of relevant forms and templates should support staff to ensure that assessments, plans and records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils are of sufficient quality.
- Leaders have completed full risk assessments that identify and address all potential risks present for pupils when using the school and its grounds. At the time of the previous inspection, the necessary work to reduce specific risks presented by aspects of the school's environment, such as the large windows and the 'dipping pool', had not been completed. The proprietor has now taken reasonable steps to reduce all identified risks for staff and pupils.
- The proprietor has commissioned the landlord to manage requirements for health and safety checks, including fire safety and the maintenance of the building. The approach being taken to this work is thorough and well documented. The headteacher and proprietor will continue to play an important role in the oversight of these checks and in making sure that all relevant standards are continually met.
- Provision for attendance and admissions registers is likely to meet requirements.
- Leaders have carefully considered supervision of pupils, ensuring that arrangements are in keeping with the school's ethos but ensure pupils' safety.
- It is likely that all the requirements of the standards in this part will be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2)–18(3), 19(2)–19(3), 20(6)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- The proprietor's human resources department is experienced at completing all the necessary safeguarding checks of the suitability of adults. It will provide this service for the school.
- The single central register is in place and is likely to meet requirements. All the relevant checks have been completed for staff appointed since the previous inspection. Systems are in place to ensure that the headteacher retains oversight of these important processes.
- It is likely that all of the requirements in this part will be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(2), 25, 26, 27–27(b), 28(1)–28(2)(b), 29(1)–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school will occupy a large, period building within substantial, well-kept grounds. It has benefited from extensive refurbishment and has been renovated to a high standard. The premises are clean, well lit and acoustically sound throughout.
- The building includes a large number of rooms over three floors. There is ample space for the proposed number of pupils. The generous accommodation will facilitate dedicated space for groups of different sizes and for different activities. There is additional space for offices, meeting areas, a kitchen, a reception area and storage.
- Separate toilet facilities are available for boys, girls and staff, including shower facilities. The hot water does not present a scalding risk. All cold water outlets are mains and the necessary drinking water labels are ready to be fitted.
- The proprietor has renovated a room since the previous inspection which will provide short-term accommodation for sick and injured pupils. A toilet has been installed next door to the medical room. The work has been completed to a high standard. The room provides pupils with a bright, airy and comfortable space for them to recuperate.
- The proprietor has completed further work to enhance safety measures in relation to the school's floor-to-floor windows and the pool area since the previous inspection.
- The proprietor's decision to install window seats in each of the large sash windows has successfully reduced the potential risk, while maintaining the benefits of natural light and attractive views. The work has been completed sensitively and in keeping with the building's historical character.
- A substantial fence has been installed around the 'dipping pool' since the previous inspection. This ensures that the pool area will only be accessible to pupils when accompanied by a member of staff via a locked and alarmed gate. Buoyancy aids have been installed and the pool's water level has been reduced considerably.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)–32(4)(c)

- The school's website shows all the required information, including details of the recently appointed headteacher. Leaders are clear about the additional information they will need to add once the school has been operating for a year, for example about academic performance.
- Leaders plan to produce termly reports for parents detailing their children's attainment and progress, with a full report annually. Provision also exists for the required reporting to local authorities that fund pupils' places.
- A special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is included in the proposed staffing structure. The SENCo will oversee arrangements for annual reviews and will ensure that all required information is provided.
- It is likely that all the requirements of the standard in this part will be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- The school has a suitable written complaints procedure published on its website. It is informed by guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) that draws a distinction between a 'concern' and a 'complaint', providing opportunity for concerns to be resolved promptly and informally wherever possible. The policy also sets out reasonable timeframes and arrangements for formal complaint procedures.
- The policy advocates an approach of encouraging people to raise concerns early and of the school 'learning lessons' from issues that are raised. This approach indicates a positive culture around this aspect of the school's work.
- It is likely that the requirements of this standard will be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The proprietor and leaders have taken swift action to address those independent school standards identified as unlikely to be met at the previous pre-registration inspection. As a result, all independent school standards are now likely to be met.
- The proprietor and leaders have created an attractive, well equipped and safe school which is likely to be ready to welcome its first pupils should the DfE decide to register it.
- Proposed systems and structures for the leadership, management and governance of the school are likely to support it to fulfil its statutory requirements and achieve its aims.
- The proprietor and leaders demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. The proprietor has extensive experience running successful registered provision for vulnerable young people.
- An interim governing body is in place to support the development and opening of the new school. These interim arrangements draw on the experienced governing body at

the proprietor's other established school. Leaders intend to set up the school's own local governing body using the same model once the school opens.

- It is likely that the standard in this part will be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has an equality policy which refers to the accessibility plan. Leaders have written the plan to cover ongoing work in preparation for the school's opening. At that point, they intend to revisit the plan and update it.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	148552
DfE registration number	845/6067
Inspection number	10202589

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Integrated Services Programme
Chair	Jo August
Headteacher	Caroline Belchem
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,000
Telephone number	07810 505 490
Website	http://ispschools.org.uk/battle
Email address	toni.reedman@polariscommunity.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Provider already operating

Number of pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable
Number of pupils of compulsory school age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority	Not applicable
Total hours operating as a school per week	Not applicable
Total hours of teaching provided per week	Not applicable

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	7 to 16	7 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	60	60

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	60
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	60
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	60
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	60

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	10
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	2

Information about this proposed school

- The school intends to cater wholly for pupils with SEND. All pupils will have an EHC plan and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- Leaders plan that the school will specialise in providing education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, as well as communication and interaction, and cognition and learning needs. Pupils may well have associated conditions such as autism spectrum disorder and/or sensory or physical needs.
- The proposed school's mission statement is 'to provide each pupil with a diverse and appropriate education in a safe, supportive environment that promotes self-discipline and engagement, inspires learning and encourages aspiration and achievement'.
- The proprietor, Integrated Services Programme (ISP), runs another similar school in Teynham, Kent. ISP is also part of the wider Polaris Community.
- The school will be housed in a large period building set within the extensive grounds of the Glengorse Estate just outside Battle. Other tenants occupy some of the other premises on the estate.

Information about this inspection

- The purpose of this inspection was to check whether the school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, if the DfE decides to register it. It was the school's first pre-registration inspection.
- The inspector discussed and reviewed all relevant proposals and plans for the new school with ISP's regional education director, the headteacher and other senior leaders. She held a virtual meeting with the chair of the proprietor body.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of curriculum documents, policies and records presented by the proprietor as evidence of the school's likelihood to meet the independent school standards, including the single central register. She also toured the school and its grounds with senior leaders.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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