

School inspection report

4 to 6 June 2024

Bede's Preparatory School

Duke's Drive

Eastbourne

Sussex

BN20 7XL

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 ensure that leaders and staff have the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively. Regular training, including for safeguarding, helps ensure that policies and procedures are implemented consistently to promote the wellbeing of pupils.
2. Pupils benefit from a rich and relevant curriculum. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning and achievement. Through the curriculum and wider school experience, leaders aim for pupils to become conscientious, courageous, curious, and compassionate. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Suitable adaptations are made to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the curriculum well. Pupils make good progress.
3. Leaders ensure that pupils develop their skills and deepen their understanding across the full range of subjects that they study. This begins in the early years. Pupils become confident communicators and are eager to share and explore their ideas. Pupils develop fluency in mathematical calculations which they apply confidently in reasoning and problem-solving. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
4. Pupils respond to the high expectations staff have of their learning and behaviour. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are implemented effectively. Pupils are respectful towards adults and towards each other. Pupils develop empathy and understanding of their own and others' needs.
5. The school has implemented a suitable programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE). The programme takes into account the age and needs of pupils. The school's extra-curricular programme is well planned and enables pupils to explore and develop their interests.
6. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are alert to potential safeguarding risks and report concerns promptly. Leaders work closely with external agencies, including local authorities, to protect pupils who may be at risk of harm.
7. During the inspection it was identified that although internet monitoring and filtering is in place, the school's filtering system was not being tested in accordance with relevant guidance. This was rectified before the end of the on-site inspection.
8. The school's approach to assessing and managing risk is generally thorough. During the inspection it was identified that a legionella risk assessment that had been carried out by an external contractor had not been clearly communicated to the school. This meant that staff were unaware of any potential risks identified by the contractor. This was rectified before the end of the on-site inspection.

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:

- all required checks are made on filtering and monitoring systems for the internet
- health and safety advice is always acted upon promptly.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school. Governors ensure that leaders have the right knowledge and range of skills to carry out their roles effectively. Governors are well informed. They make sure that policies are implemented effectively so that the Standards are consistently met.
10. Leaders' development plans are informed through well-considered self-evaluation. Governors hold leaders effectively to account for the impact of their work to develop the school's provision for pupils' education and to promote pupils' wellbeing.
11. Information about the school's ethos, the school's curriculum and the school's policies and procedures is published on the school's website as required. Parents regularly receive information about their child's progress. A detailed written report is shared with parents twice each year.
12. Leaders in the early years work closely together to create a consistent approach to children's learning as they move from Nursery to the Reception class. Staff in the early years work closely with parents to support children's wellbeing, learning and progress.
13. The school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act, including the effective implementation of an accessibility plan. Accessibility arrangements are regularly reviewed, and adjustments made when necessary to ensure that pupils can access the full range of opportunities across the school.
14. In general, the approach to assessing risk is thorough. During the inspection it was identified that a legionella risk assessment had been carried out by the school's external contractor. Although the completed risk assessment had been published on the contractor's portal in March 2024, this was not clearly communicated to the school. This meant that staff were unaware of any potential risks identified by the contractor. This was rectified during the inspection. Systems are now in place to ensure that there is a clear point of contact for contractors to communicate with the school.
15. A suitable complaints policy is in place. Leaders take appropriate steps in responding to parental concerns. Leaders maintain systematic records of complaints that are made to the school and how these are followed up.
16. The safeguarding team has the knowledge, skills and understanding to carry out their roles effectively. They know the thresholds for referral to external agencies and refer concerns promptly when required. Leaders work closely with the local authority so that families can access the help and support they need. Any concerns about members of staff are promptly referred to the local area designated officer (LADO) and appropriate action is taken.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. There is a well-planned curriculum in place across the full range of subjects. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the curriculum well. Lessons are thoughtfully planned. Staff make good use of resources and lesson time. Staff take account of pupils' prior knowledge and attainment when planning lessons. Pupils develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum and make good progress.
19. Teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons before they move on to new learning. Prompt and regular feedback helps pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers adapt their teaching methods well so that pupils who have SEND are supported well in lessons and make good progress.
20. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are assessed before they join the school. Leaders use this assessment to put in place appropriate support to help pupils who speak EAL develop their confidence and fluency in spoken and written English so that they can participate fully in lessons and make good progress in their learning. Staff receive appropriate guidance which enables them to tailor their teaching to meet the needs of pupils who speak EAL.
21. Teaching provides pupils with opportunities to practise and apply their knowledge. This helps pupils deepen their understanding and achieve well across the full range of subjects that they study. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and be curious, for example in history, through the use of portraiture to stimulate discussion about life in the mediaeval period. In art, pupils are encouraged to see themselves as artists. Teaching supports this by enabling pupils to develop confidence in using a range of techniques, for example by developing ideas from their sketch books to produce high quality print work.
22. In the early years, children develop confidence and independence in their learning as a result of an appropriate curriculum and well-trained staff. Resources are thoughtfully matched to children's needs and interests. Staff support children well to develop their language and their conceptual understanding through role play, questioning and the introduction of subject-specific vocabulary. For example, children are introduced to words such as 'orbit' and 'propel' when exploring the theme of space. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
23. Pupils become articulate and confident communicators. They share their ideas in lessons, support and encourage each other, and listen well to what each other has to say. Pupils take pride in their work and enthusiastically share their achievements.
24. The curriculum and teaching support pupils to develop proficiency in mathematics. Pupils develop fluency in calculations through regular practice. Teaching enables pupils to apply their knowledge in problem-solving and mathematical reasoning.
25. Leaders have developed an effective framework for assessment. Leaders use this framework well to monitor pupils' progress and achievement and identify pupils who would benefit from further support. The assessment framework also enables leaders and staff to review the progress and achievement of different groups of pupils identified by the school including pupils who have SEND.
26. There is a suitable programme of recreational activities which helps pupils to develop and further their interests across a wide range of areas including sport, drama, and music. Leaders have

introduced an extensive enrichment programme which helps pupils to develop skills such as critical thinking. This programme has a positive impact on pupils' learning in other curriculum areas, such as pupils using richer vocabulary in English.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

28. Pupils are encouraged to be physically active. They regularly participate in a variety of physical activities, including dance, swimming, and a range of sports. Pupils learn that physical activity is important to maintain good physical and mental health. Children in the early years flourish in their physical development through opportunities such as swimming and dance. Children develop confidence, strength and control.
29. From the early years, children learn the attitudes and behaviours that help them to develop positive relationships in school. Routines are well established across the school. Pupils respond to the high expectations that staff have of their learning and behaviour.
30. Pupils feel safe in school. They are confident that there is someone they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Incidents of behaviour and bullying are dealt with robustly. Leaders have put in place several ways that pupils and parents can use to raise concerns with the school, such as the 'I wish my teacher knew' box, 'chill and chat sessions' and a dedicated 'I need to talk' email address. Pupils know that any information they share with staff will be taken seriously. This is because staff act sensitively and thoughtfully when they are working with pupils to help them resolve any issues they may have in school.
31. Staff are consistent in their management of behaviour. Leaders' expectations of respectful behaviours are reinforced through the PSHE curriculum, form time and assemblies. Leaders have put in place strategies to help pupils recognise and manage their emotions in school, such as the use of 'brain break' cards.
32. Leaders have implemented a well-structured curriculum for PSHE and RSE that is appropriate to the age of pupils. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves and others safe, including when they are using the internet. Parents are provided with guidance and resources to support discussions about RSE and PSHE at home.
33. The school's admission and attendance registers are well maintained and managed effectively. Local authorities are kept informed of pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition times in the school year. Pupils are not removed from the school roll until leaders receive confirmation that pupils have been added to the roll at their next school. Staff are diligent in ensuring that any safeguarding information is shared appropriately with the next school.
34. Appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place, regularly reviewed and implemented effectively. There is suitable provision to take care of any pupils who are unwell or injured. Staff receive relevant first aid training. Appropriate records are kept, including those relating to accidents and injuries and the administration of medicines.
35. The premises and accommodation are appropriately maintained and are suitable to the age and needs of the pupils. During the inspection, the boarding house was closed for refurbishment.

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

36. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

37. Children in the early years develop their social skills and involve each other in their play. They play and work well alongside each other, for example when they are painting and drawing. Staff enable children to develop their confidence in social situations, for example, when dividing and sharing fruit at snack time.
38. From an early age, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of right from wrong. PSHE promotes pupils' understanding of democracy and the rule of law. Teaching responds to current themes in the local, national and international news. This helps pupils make connections between their learning in PSHE and its relevance to the wider world. Pupils develop an understanding of the democratic system through regular opportunities to vote on topical news stories and moral dilemmas.
39. Pupils learn about different cultures and religious beliefs through the curriculum, chapel and wider discussions. Pupils learn about different festivals, traditions and customs. Pupils learn the importance of tolerance, and how important it is to respect each other's views and opinions. Pupils are well informed and are confident to discuss areas such as neurodiversity, gender and race using appropriate terminology.
40. Pupils are knowledgeable about diversity, equality, and equity. They have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and can explain the importance of protected characteristics. Leaders ensure that pupils are presented with a balanced perspective on political issues. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is promoted through different areas of the curriculum, for example, in history where pupils learn about the relationship between the church, monarchy and government.
41. Suitable careers guidance helps raise pupils' awareness of the skills required for different kinds of employment, both in the local area and nationally. This helps inform pupils about the decisions they can make for their future. Pupils learn about the significance and value of money, for example, through exploring ideas about how they might earn and how they can plan for their future through the salary they might receive. Pupils explore what it means to be an entrepreneur, how to develop their ideas into a saleable product, and what makes people happy at work. Visiting speakers provide insights into a range of careers. Older pupils value the opportunity to participate in the careers fair which takes place at the senior school.
42. Leaders have developed purposeful links with the local community. Pupils are involved in community projects such as local litter picking on the beach, reading poetry composed by pupils at local residential homes, and working together to support local charities. Eco club provides an opportunity for pupils of all ages to explore ways in which they can contribute positively to the environment.

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

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

Safeguarding

44. Leaders and staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders provide regular safeguarding training and updates. This helps keep safeguarding at the forefront of everyone's mind.
45. The school's comprehensive safeguarding and child protection policies reflect statutory guidance. They set out clearly the practices and procedures that support a positive safeguarding culture across the school.
46. During the inspection it was identified that although internet monitoring and filtering is in place, the school's filtering system was not being tested in accordance with relevant guidance. This was rectified before the end of the inspection.
47. Governors are diligent in their oversight of safeguarding. They provide appropriate challenge to leaders to ensure that safeguarding practices are robust, and that policies and procedures are implemented effectively.
48. Staff are clear about what they should do if they are concerned that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report concerns promptly. Staff are confident to challenge each other to ensure that safeguarding practices are robust. New members of staff are required to take part in safeguarding induction training before they take up their position at the school.
49. Recruitment procedures are thorough. Records of checks that are made in relation to new members of staff, governors, volunteers, and contractors are detailed and appropriate. Appropriate checks are also made when a member of staff is promoted to a leadership role within the school. Leaders' effective oversight ensures that all steps in the recruitment process are followed systematically.
50. Leaders liaise appropriately with external agencies and are persistent in following up concerns. There is a clear process in place for reporting concerns relating to members of staff. This includes making referrals to the LADO when necessary.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

51. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

Setting 1: Bede's Nursery, at Downs House

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

52. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is inadequate.
53. The findings at this inspection do not impact the second registered setting at this school.
54. There has been a recent change of leaders. Supervision, support and coaching that leaders for this setting have received has not been sufficient to support them in their role.
55. Underlying issues in relation to lack of leaders' knowledge, and support for leaders and staff at this setting have led to poor planning, decision-making and risk assessments that have a significant impact on children's safety and wellbeing. This impacts the leadership and management, personal development and safeguarding judgements.
56. Overall, the quality of education provided and children's attitudes to learning are positive and children make good progress. Staff structure the curriculum to help to develop children's skills in the prime areas of learning. Staff explain the importance of building children's hand muscles in preparation for writing. They talk about the different ways that they do this, such as by encouraging children to make marks in different ways, and providing tools for children to use to write with during their imaginary play.
57. Children usually have positive attitudes to learning, for example when they can see the toys that are available and are able to make choices about what they want to play with. Staff provide a range of opportunities for children to play and explore outdoors which helps them to practise skills that they are learning, such as climbing and balancing.

Quality of education

58. The quality of education is good.
59. Leaders use additional funding well to support individual children. For instance, they use funding to provide staff support to children where needed. They liaise with professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to seek and then implement advice and guidance.
60. Staff support young children's language development effectively. For instance, they constantly provide a narrative to children's play. They similarly weave in singing into their interactions with children, which exposes them to new words and promotes their developing vocabulary. Children wave their arms in excitement as staff sing familiar rhymes and songs to them. They babble and attempt to say key familiar words at these times.
61. Staff find out about the activities that the youngest children complete at home and they use this to inform their planning. They also seek information about children's family context, such as parents' jobs, and they bring this into children's play. For example, where staff recognise the importance of

cooking in one family, they include imaginary play opportunities that relate to this. This brings a sense of familiarity to children's play.

Behaviour and attitudes

62. Behaviour and attitudes are good.
63. Staff are positive role models. They provide plenty of praise and positive feedback to children. For instance, in the baby room, staff clap with younger babies when they successfully complete simple tasks, such as scooping and pouring sensory materials. This helps to boost levels of self-esteem.
64. Staff take appropriate action to support children who find particular situations difficult to manage. For instance, they understand that children's attendance pattern or absence periods may mean that they become unsettled. Staff make sure that they position themselves close by so that children are able to play independently yet return to them for reassurance when needed. This helps to build small steps in children's confidence to explore on their own.
65. At times, staff are eager to move children's learning on too quickly when children are engaged in their learning and their interest can be extended. For instance, as children explore scarves and push them in and out of bowls, staff recognise and praise that they do this. However, they quickly move children's learning on without considering how this interest could be extended further. At other times, staff unnecessarily guide children away from activities that they are engaged with, such as sensory play, as other children participating have lost interest. This does not fully promote their positive attitudes to learning.

Personal development

66. The personal development of children is inadequate.
67. Shortcomings in leadership and management and breaches of requirement impact on children's personal development. Procedures and practice observed during the inspection do not consistently promote the health and welfare of children and they demonstrate underlying issues relating to staff knowledge and understanding.
68. Whilst sleeping arrangements for some children were reviewed during the inspection, younger babies sleep in buggies where their movement is restricted and ventilation is more limited. The intention for babies to sleep in this manner is positive, however, sleeping arrangements for some children do not match the provision for the majority of children which is suitable.
69. Nevertheless, settling-in procedures and partnerships with parents are positive. Staff implement flexible settling-in procedures to help children develop a secure attachment with their key person. For instance, as children transition to new rooms within the nursery, parents receive information about all staff in the room, to help them become familiar with them before their children move. Parents comment that they appreciate the communications they receive from staff at the beginning and end of each day and through online communications. They say that they feel well supported by staff, in particular in relation to supporting their children in stages of their social development, such as helping them to understand how to support their children when they encounter challenges as they learn to play alongside others.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are inadequate.
71. Due to extenuating circumstances, the provider had not notified the regulator of changes to the manager and changes to the premises at Bede's Nursery. This was rectified during the course of the inspection.
72. The temporary change to the premises involved a closure of a sleep room and an overall reduction in usable space. This closure meant that areas of the nursery were consequently used for different purposes. This affected the quality of childcare and had a significant impact on children's safety and wellbeing.
73. Leaders did not effectively plan for the room closure and assess the potential risks and impact to children in different aspects of their routine. For example, children from the baby room did not have a space to sleep and therefore were placed to sleep in buggies for all daily naps. Young children's play space was converted into a sleep space reducing the area available for play. This impacted the quality of support for children's learning and development.
74. The closure similarly affected staff's ability to meet requirements relating to food and drink. For instance, space for eating was reduced to one area for both age ranges and there was a demand for all children to use the limited space at the same time. This meant that some children's needs were not met. It also led to unnecessary challenges for staff in the baby room, who were unable to follow their usual routines. This meant that some babies were eating snacks while crawling, posing a choking risk. Leaders had not identified this risk or taken action to mitigate it, demonstrating a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to prioritise the needs of these children.
75. Fresh drinking water was not available or easily accessible in the baby room and some babies had not been offered drinks for some time. For example, baby cups and beakers were stored on a unit out of reach of any children and staff did not offer drinks. This did not promote children's wellbeing.
76. A fire exit was blocked by large furniture in the younger children's room. Again, leaders had failed to recognise the risk or take action to mitigate it. This demonstrates a lack of understanding of the importance of safety issues, risk to staff and children, and requirements from the early years foundation stage statutory framework. It also exposed a lack of understanding of the need to be accountable for meeting requirements and to monitor staff practice. Other staff similarly lacked understanding of why this would seriously impact children's safety.
77. Most of the serious concerns identified were rectified by leaders during the course of the inspection. This minimised the immediate risk to children. However, these issues demonstrate an underlying issue in relation to lack of knowledge, leadership and decision-making, and appropriate assessment of risk.

Safeguarding

78. Safeguarding is not effective.

79. Breaches of requirements in relation to safeguarding and welfare demonstrate shortcomings in leaders' knowledge and ability to assess the impact of decision-making on children and minimise risk.
80. However, staff have a secure understanding of child protection procedures both within and outside their setting. They are able to explain the procedures to follow if they have a concern about children. They are familiar with signs and symptoms of abuse and they can explain these with confidence. For example, they are able to talk about radical and extreme views and behaviours, signs of neglect and causes for concern in relation to babies who cannot yet walk.

Areas for action

- Ensure that staff training develops knowledge and that staff implement what they learn effectively in practice, particularly in relation to emergency evacuation and health and safety issues.
- Improve monitoring and staff supervision for leaders at all levels to ensure that this enables them to improve their own personal effectiveness, knowledge and ability to be held accountable for the quality of the provision.
- Improve staff knowledge and understanding of how to assess and manage risk on a daily basis to ensure that children and staff are not exposed to unnecessary risks.

Recommended next steps

- Review sleep arrangements so that all children have an equally comfortable and well-ventilated sleep experience.
- Support staff to understand how to extend learning and recognise how to cater for children who remain engaged and some that want to move on.

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

The school's registered provision for childcare does not consistently meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006. A schedule of unmet requirements is included below.

Schedule of unmet early years foundation stage requirements in the registered early years setting 1

Section 3 – The safeguarding and welfare requirements

The relevant requirements are not met.

Paragraph number	Early years foundation stage requirements
EYFS 3.26	What practitioners know, plan for, and do matters for children’s learning, development, safety, and happiness in settings. Providers must ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues. Providers must support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.
EYFS 3.27	Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching, and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.
EYFS 3.76	Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks. Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

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

Setting 2: Bede's Nursery at Holywell

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

81. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
82. The curriculum is designed carefully to respond to children's individual needs and interests, and this helps children make good progress. Staff plan learning experiences that build on children's knowledge. They make learning fun and relevant. Staff present new information clearly and demonstrate a secure knowledge of the subjects they are introducing.
83. Children respond positively to staff who act as positive role models. There is a clear air of mutual respect between children and staff, and politeness is regularly reinforced and praised. Children listen to staff and can follow instructions successfully.
84. Children are confident and happy within the nursery. Staff warmly welcome and settle children into the class and know the children well. Staff interact positively with children, helping them to focus and supporting them with their care needs. This helps children fully engage in their learning and encourages greater independence, such as during mealtimes.
85. Leaders place utmost importance on supporting staff work-life balance and wellbeing. For example, leaders encourage completion of records on working days only and they discourage staff from taking work home. Leaders are realistic about the time staff need to fulfil their duties and deploy additional staff in rooms accordingly to provide time to complete these tasks.
86. Safeguarding arrangements are suitably considered and understood by staff. They are effective.

Quality of education

87. The quality of education is good.
88. Staff are clear in what they specifically want children to learn. They have embraced the managements' recent enhancements to the approach in teaching and adapted planning methods. These have placed a focus on meaningful adult interaction, and there is evidence of staff using appropriate questioning that supports the development of children's language and subject knowledge well.
89. Children demonstrate a love for books, which is fostered by staff involving them in storytelling and retelling stories with considerable animation. Younger children take great delight in summarising the storyline of a favourite story. Older children are beginning to recognise printed words, with some able to confidently read labels on games and use the correct pencil grip when drawing detailed pictures.
90. Staff seize opportunities to extend children's learning and make learning relevant, such as in an outdoor class session where staff explained where oranges come from and explored their taste.

Children then made juice for their snack. Staff are clear in what they intend children will learn in the activity, such as the development of motor skills through squeezing the oranges.

91. Staff are suitably knowledgeable and choose appropriate activities to reinforce children's learning in mathematics and deepen their understanding of scientific concepts. They create a language-rich environment where children comfortably try out new vocabulary. For example, in a floating and sinking experiment younger children learned the correct names of objects, such as 'flannel'. Children's number knowledge is continually reinforced, such as by counting steps and discussions about age.

Behaviour and attitudes

92. Behaviour and attitudes are good.
93. Children behave well and are kind to one another. Staff reinforce the value of acts of kindness and offer plenty of praise. This creates a harmonious environment where children are comfortable to engage with staff and other members of their class. Staff foster positive relationships with parents and recognise the importance of working together to support children's learning and development. Opportunities to share information about children at the beginning and end of the day are valued by parents. The nursery children are very much considered part of the wider school family. For instance, children eat their lunch in the school dining room. Children act sensibly at mealtimes where they use good table manners and engage in polite conversation.
94. Staff carefully choose exciting activities that capture children's interests, and this helps children develop positive attitudes to learning and get the most out of their experiences. For instance, younger children showed amazement at how oil forms a separate layer when it is poured into water. In the older age range, children fully immerse themselves in activities linked to their favourite topics, such as pirates and sea-life. Children's pride in their work is obvious when they rush to show staff their creations.
95. Children can sustain interest in singing songs and listening to stories in groups for suitable periods of time. At times, where these sessions go on a little too long, some children can lose focus, and this results in restless behaviour which can disturb the calm atmosphere.

Personal development

96. The personal development of children is good.
97. Children are beginning to gain an appreciation for the diverse world in which they live through opportunities to learn songs in different languages. For example, older children enthusiastically joined in a welcome song that included many different languages, as well as singing a Swahili version of head, shoulders, knees and toes.
98. Staff are successful in helping children to develop an understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, including dental hygiene. Staff weave learning into the day based on children's comments. This helps support children who are facing new life experiences, such as by preparing them for their first trip to the dentist.

99. Children are well prepared for the next step in their education. Nursery children meet their new teachers and spend time in their new environment before the start of the new academic year. Being 'school ready' is a big focus in the Pre-School class. Staff plan learning experiences that equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning they will need for school. For example, by introducing children to the sounds that letters make.

Leadership and management

100. Leadership and management are good.

101. Leaders are fully committed to promoting best practice and ensuring that the children in their care can access a high-quality provision that meets their individual needs. The new management team have already introduced new initiatives to develop staff practice, and their vision has been embraced by the staff team.

102. Leaders have effective systems in place to ensure that children who have SEND are carefully monitored and supported appropriately. Leaders and staff work with parents to help address any specific needs at an early stage and seek external advice from specialists where appropriate.

103. Governors play an active role in the early years foundation stage. For example, the early years governor has met the new head of nursery and has visited the provision. They are kept well informed of nursery updates.

104. The provider has not notified the regulator of a change in nursery manager as required. This is because of extenuating circumstances. However, this has had no impact on the quality of education and care for children. The school have checked suitability of the nursery manager, following safer recruitment procedures. Children's day to day experiences are positive, with leaders and staff successfully meeting the needs of the range of children who attend.

Safeguarding

105. Safeguarding is effective.

106. The provider has effective arrangements in place to help safeguard children. An experienced safeguarding team is on hand to oversee and deal with concerns. They arrange staff training and check their knowledge through regular quizzes. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of safeguarding arrangements, the signs to look out for and what to do should they have any concerns.

Recommended next steps

- Support staff to allocate appropriate lengths of time to group activities to help children remain focused on their learning.

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

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

School details

School	Bede's Preparatory School
Department for Education number	845/6011
Registered early years number	EY340176 and EY497919
Registered charity number	278950
Address	Bede's Preparatory School Duke's Drive Eastbourne East Sussex BN20 7XL
Phone number	01323 356700
Email address	prep.school@bedes.org
Website	www.bedes.org/prep
Proprietor	St Bede's School Trust
Chair	Geraldine Watkins
Headteacher	Leigh-Anne Morris
Age range	0 to 13
Number of pupils	322
Number of boarding pupils	0
Number of children in the early years registered setting 1	27
Number of children in the early years registered setting 2	44
Date of previous inspection	6 to 7 November 2019

Information about the school

108. Bede's Preparatory School is an independent co-educational school. The school is owned and managed by the St Bede's School Trust, which is a company limited by guarantee where the members of the Board of Governors are also the Directors of the Company. The Board of Governors are also the Company Members. The Trust is a registered charity. Members of the Board of Governors are also Trustees of the charity. The headteacher of the senior school is the CEO of the Trust.
109. The school provides boarding accommodation for up to 25 pupils from Year 5 to Year 8. At the time of the inspection, the boarding house was closed for refurbishment and there were no boarders at the school. Leaders plan for the boarding house to reopen to boarders from September 2024.
110. There are 107 children in the school's two registered Nursery settings. There are 9 children in the Reception class.
111. The school has identified 77 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
112. English is an additional language for five pupils.
113. The school states its aims are to cultivate a vibrant learning experience, motivating all to pursue their individual best, where every child finds joy in the pursuit of brilliance.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 June 2024

114. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

115. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and Chapel
- 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

116. 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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