

# School inspection report

23 to 25 September 2025

## **Ewell Castle School**

Church Street

Ewell

Epsom

Surrey

KT17 2AW

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS .....	5
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE .....	7
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	9
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	11
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	13
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>14</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	14
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors and leaders have a shared vision and aims for the school to inspire, engage and excel, encouraging its pupils to thrive in a vibrant, creative and academic environment. Pupils' wellbeing is a central part of the decisions that they make. Collectively, leaders, governors, staff and pupils have created an inclusive culture in which pupils are safe, valued and well cared for.
2. Governors provide effective oversight of leaders' work and life at the school. Governors ensure that leaders possess the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities and maintain the requirements of the Standards consistently. Governors and leaders know the school well. They use their thorough awareness of the school's achievements and areas for development to plan strategically to bring improvements in provision for pupils.
3. Leaders provide a range of information to parents and external agencies, often via the school's website. This information includes a range of policies and procedures related to the daily running of the school. However, at the start of the inspection, there were administrative omissions in the school's policies and processes related to complaints and attendance, including some lack of detail provided in the records of complaints. These were rectified before the end of the inspection.
4. Leaders have created a curriculum that is well planned and supports pupils, as they get older, to study a broad range of qualifications at BTEC, GCSE and A level. An extensive range of co-curricular activities supports pupils' holistic development, in line with the school's ethos. These opportunities enable pupils to develop their self-confidence and self-belief, as well as to discover their strengths and interests. The school's tennis academy is a notable example, recently achieving national and international success.
5. Most teaching delivers the curriculum effectively. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to challenge their thinking, develop their problem-solving skills and learn effectively. However, in the senior school, some teachers do not consistently plan and adapt their lessons effectively enough to support the learning of some pupils. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress over time of which they are capable.
6. Leaders have designed and implemented a curriculum for the early years that enables the youngest children to learn and develop in a supportive and well-resourced environment. Their early communication, language, reading, writing and number skills are very well supported. They are well prepared to transition into Year 1.
7. Leaders invest in supporting pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing in a range of ways. High-quality pastoral support and whole-school wellbeing initiatives provide bespoke support for pupils on a daily basis. Leaders manage behaviour and bullying issues effectively. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are positive. Teachers know their pupils well and personalise learning appropriately and with care. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and well through a range of subjects across the curriculum.
8. Pupils' social and economic education are well embedded in the school's curriculum and daily life. Pupils are taught about the world of work beyond school and provided with age-appropriate career advice so that they are aware of the range of options and pathways available to them. They are taught about the importance of respect and valuing diversity in the school community. Many pupils enthusiastically take on roles and responsibilities, including in the sixth form.

9. There is an effective culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are suitably trained and know how to respond to safeguarding concerns. Leaders liaise well with external agencies to provide additional support for pupils and their families. Safer recruitment processes and pre-employment checks are completed in a timely and effective manner and recorded accurately.

## 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 their implementation of the complaints policy reflects the effective practice in the school, so that the details of complaints are consistently well recorded
- ensure that the information provided in policies, such as the attendance policy, reflects the precise practice of the school's work and that required information related to the numbers of complaints is made fully available to parents on an annual basis
- ensure that all teachers in the senior school consistently plan and adapt their teaching, in line with the school's strategy, so that pupils can make the best possible progress over time.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders have the wellbeing and personal development of pupils at the heart of the decisions that they make for the school. Leaders prioritise whole-school initiatives that celebrate equality, diversity and inclusivity, fostering a school culture where pupils are known as individuals and feel valued. Leaders promote pupil wellbeing by ensuring that staff are well trained, so that they act in accordance with the school's values.
11. The governing body maintains an effective oversight of the work of the leaders through regular reports, meetings and visits to the school. Governors provide leaders with a level of support and challenge that helps shape the strategic direction of the school. They ensure that leaders and managers have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and that the requirements of the Standards are consistently met.
12. Leaders across the school are highly effective in routinely reviewing the provision in place. For instance, subject leaders and senior leaders use information from learning walks, drop-ins and peer observations to ensure consistency and continuous improvement in teaching and learning, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders use their thorough understanding about the school to identify and act to secure improvements in the provision for pupils. For example, they recently implemented a new three-year teaching and learning initiative aimed at improving how pupils understand how they think and behave.
13. Leadership in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) ensures that the children's wellbeing is actively promoted by appropriately trained staff and a well-resourced, well-directed and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils and enables them to make good progress.
14. Leaders undertake all appropriate steps to identify, assess and manage potential risks to pupils' wellbeing. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in managing risk, including an awareness of real-time risks and near misses. Regular external audits by specialists ensure that any areas for development in leaders' work are identified and addressed. Records are well maintained, in which staff record incidents, and follow-up actions are taken promptly. There are suitable risk assessments in place, including those related to the curriculum, site management and off-site activities.
15. There is an appropriate complaints policy in place and leaders implement this effectively. Typically, complaints are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner. Leaders keep a record of all complaints, including action taken, any outcomes and the stage reached. However, some of the recording of this information lacks detail. This reduces the ability of leaders and governors to review and monitor their effectiveness in dealing with complaints with sufficient precision.
16. Leaders provide parents and external agencies with required information, often via the school's website. However, at the start of the inspection, there were omissions in the information that was available. There was not a record of the number of complaints during the preceding school year and the attendance policy did not precisely reflect the current work in the school. These issues were rectified before the end of the inspection.
17. Leaders ensure that they provide parents and relevant external agencies with required information related to individual pupils. Parents receive regular reports concerning their child's attainment and progress. Leaders ensure that they provide the local authority with relevant information, including that related to the provision, finance and funding arrangements for pupils who have an education,

health and care plan (EHC plan). They also inform them of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

18. School leaders understand their roles and responsibilities in terms of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have put a detailed and regularly reviewed accessibility plan in place. The school makes appropriate adjustments so that all pupils can access the curriculum and co-curricular programme and develop knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders have designed a curriculum where pupils experience a wide range of subjects and are supported to make links between the different topics and subjects that they study. Leaders invest in providing pupils with a vibrant and well-resourced curriculum, including a rich outdoor learning environment. This allows pupils to enjoy and engage in their learning in a variety of different ways.
21. As pupils get older, they benefit from experiencing an array of qualifications to support vocational and academic study, such as BTEC, GCSE and A-level subjects. Leaders constantly review this curriculum to see where they can bring improvements in the best interests of pupils. For instance, recently developing the curriculum to encourage pupils to consider more about skills and values and how they think about their learning.
22. Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons that consider their needs, prior knowledge and understanding. Teachers use a variety of techniques to encourage pupils to develop resilience, empathy and cognitive skills. In the prep school, for example, teachers emphasise the importance of different learning behaviours, enabling pupils to focus on skills and characteristics that will support their academic and social achievements. In the senior school, a range of activities are employed effectively in mathematics to develop pupils' problem-solving skills. Teachers provide effective guidance and feedback to pupils to help them address misconceptions or apply their learning in more complex ways.
23. However, there are some lessons in the senior school where teachers do not consistently plan and adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils are learning effectively. As a result, some pupils struggle to access and remain focused on their learning and do not learn as well as they should.
24. Leaders use a range of performance information and assessment to evaluate pupils' work and performance regularly. They promptly identify pupils who need additional support and provide this, for instance, through additional subject clinics or drop-in sessions. They also use this information to identify where they can provide further training for staff or changes to the curriculum. For example, in the prep school, providing additional training for staff in phonics and introducing a new scheme for spelling. As a result, pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 11 and Year 13, achieve well at BTEC, GCSE and A level.
25. Pupils who have SEND are supported well. Effective communication with prior schools during the admission process, the use of diagnostic screening tests and informed teacher referrals means that the needs of pupils are quickly identified. The learning support team develops individual learning plans for pupils who have SEND that teachers use effectively to ensure that pupils keep up with their peers in lessons. Where needed, leaders provide additional one-to-one support lessons, group study skills lessons and/or supervised study sessions. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress over time.
26. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) experience well-structured support in lessons where teachers use strategies to support learning. Where required, pupils also benefit from a programme of either one-to-one or group sessions with a specialist language teacher. As a result, pupils who speak EAL make good progress with their English and develop their verbal and written language proficiency.

27. Leaders in the early years are knowledgeable and skilled. They plan a curriculum that thinks carefully about helping children to develop across a broad range of areas. The curriculum is well resourced so that children access high-quality facilities through the indoor and outdoor environment. Staff prioritise the development of communication and language, often modelling this when interacting with children. Children's early reading, writing and number skills are very well developed. As a result, they are very well prepared to transition into Year 1.
28. Leaders provide an extensive range of co-curricular clubs and enrichment opportunities that enhance the academic curriculum, as well as providing opportunities to further develop the sporting, spiritual, creative and technical skills of the pupils and supporting their wellbeing. Sixth-form pupils are encouraged to initiate and lead clubs, which supports their personal development as well as the experiences of younger pupils. The school has a highly successful tennis academy, currently holding the titles of national champions and world silver medallists.

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

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

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

30. Leaders prioritise pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing. They invest in providing pupils with a range of support through a well-structured pastoral care system and opportunities to have their concerns heard, for example, through a class wellbeing box, by placing their name on an emotional register in their classroom or by using the school's online system known as 'SHARP' (student help advice reporting pathway). Pupils are valued, known and are well supported and encouraged to grow as individuals. Leaders provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
31. Leaders provide a well-structured personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum that enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. The curriculum, along with additional assemblies and talks, offers a broad spectrum of guidance, with particular attention paid to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
32. There is an appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) programme, including for sixth-form pupils, which provides age-appropriate information and support, enabling pupils to explore attitudes and values and make informed, positive decisions. Pupils engage enthusiastically in these lessons and gain opportunities to talk freely, including in single-sex sessions for male and female pupils when appropriate. Leaders consult with parents and pupils about the curriculum content appropriately.
33. There is a well-planned and adeptly delivered physical education (PE) curriculum in place for pupils. Through an appropriate programme of physical education, sport and fitness, pupils develop skills in a range of team and individual sports. The curriculum is well resourced, providing appropriate equipment, such as climbing apparatus, to meet the physical needs of pupils. This curriculum is enhanced by learning in PSHE related to healthy lifestyles and nutrition. Many pupils also engage in the extensive co-curricular sport programme, with over 20 teams participating in competitive sport opportunities. Leaders ensure that there are many opportunities for the development of pupils' physical wellbeing.
34. Children in the early years are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their personal and physical knowledge and skills. Staff help the youngest children to recognise the importance of playing and learning together. Children are well supported to develop their gross and fine motor skills through daily opportunities and bespoke PE lessons. Staff successfully encourage children to work together to solve problems and celebrate their classmates. Consequently, children behave well, are kind and caring to each other and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
35. There are appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies, which are implemented effectively. Positive relationships exist between members of the school community; staff are good role models so that pupils recognise and understand the school values. Pupils behave well both in and out of class and the few bullying incidents that may occur are dealt with swiftly and sensitively by the pastoral team. Behaviour around the school site is very good. Pupils are respectful, helpful and confident when interacting with their peers and staff. Leaders' records of sanctions, behaviour and bullying are thorough. Leaders use this information to ensure that pupils are well supported to be the best version of themselves.

36. The school premises are well maintained and allow for pupils to safely and securely enjoy and benefit from the ample outside space. Leaders ensure that records of health and safety checks, fire audits, fire drills and risk assessments are up to date, thorough and evaluated regularly. The governing body provides additional oversight and quality assurance of the effectiveness of leaders' work to meet statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that suitable supervision for pupils is in place in lessons, during recreational times and during off-site activities. They are particularly aware of areas of the school that may be a hazard, such as the main school entrance and outside play areas.
37. Attendance and admission records are maintained appropriately. Leaders and governors regularly monitor and analyse these records to ensure compliance. Leaders understand the fact that pupil absence can sometimes indicate a safeguarding concern, and they are diligent in their response to this, working well with the local authority, including when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points. However, there were gaps in the school's attendance policy that did not reflect the positive practice in the school. These omissions were remedied before the inspection concluded.

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

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

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

39. Leaders create a highly inclusive and community-orientated school environment. Important values are effectively promoted through the curriculum. In PSHE, English, history, and government and politics, for example, pupils engage critically with themes such as colonialism, liberty, democracy, Parliament and other contemporary affairs. They learn about important public roles, such as the police and health services. They are taught about the importance of respect for those with different lifestyles, faiths, beliefs, cultures and sexual orientation. Staff and pupils actively promote the school's shared values of personal integrity, mutual respect, social responsibility and lifelong resilience.
40. Leaders ensure that the careers programme meets statutory guidance and provides pupils with tailored and impartial support, informing pupils about a wide range of possible careers and educational pathways. Pupils receive increasingly structured and personalised support at specific transition points, including career assessments, one-to-one interviews and bespoke action plans. Pupils are well supported to make informed academic choices and successful progression to the next steps of their education, training and employment, including many pupils who successfully achieve places in competitive post-18 educational establishments in the UK, Europe and North America.
41. Leaders ensure that pupils develop an understanding of age-appropriate economic and financial matters as they progress through the school. For example, in the early years and prep school, teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' economic understanding by making valuable links to real-life situations through their investigative play. In age appropriate lessons, pupils in the senior school learn about important topics such as tax, 'scamming' and gambling. Older pupils in the sixth form, through the school's 'big debate', explore and contextualise their economic understanding through challenging motions such as the role and efficiency of government-provided housing.
42. Leaders plan opportunities for pupils of all ages to appreciate their locality and to develop a sense of social responsibility within the school and wider community. For example, younger pupils play their ukuleles at the local residential home and attend the local park to pick up litter as part of their 'eco club'. Older pupils engage enthusiastically with enterprise projects, house charity initiatives, work experience and outreach projects, strengthening community links and developing their own self-confidence, leadership ability and future employability. Sixth-form peer mentors are effectively trained to support younger members of the school community.
43. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of right and wrong through lessons and activities that promote the school's values and develop high moral and ethical standards. From an early age, children in the early years learn that rules are put in place to help them, as they carefully follow their teacher's instructions on how to safely move from their sitting position on the carpet to their chair and table. Older pupils learn how rules and laws, made by government, help to protect us and keep us safe. The school council enables pupils to develop an understanding of a democratic voting system and a recognition of the fact that they have a process by which they can effect change through a formal expression of ideas.

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

**44. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

45. Leaders have established effective measures to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of pupils. Policies and protocols reflect current statutory guidance, are in place and are implemented effectively. They have established a vigilant and responsive safeguarding culture throughout the school.
46. The designated safeguarding leaders are trained appropriately for their roles. They meet regularly to share information and to ensure suitable action is taken to safeguard pupils in the short and longer term. They work closely with external agencies to seek advice and, when necessary, make timely referrals. Records are well maintained. Leaders review these records regularly to support one another and to see if there are any wider issues for pupils or in the school that need addressing.
47. The safeguarding team ensures that staff receive appropriate and regular safeguarding training. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure that staff starting at non-typical points in the year receive high-quality induction safeguarding training. Leaders ensure that staff are aware of the policy and procedures for reporting concerns about adults working with pupils, including low-level concerns, and how to refer directly to the local authority, if needed. As a result, staff are knowledgeable, vigilant and report concerns appropriately.
48. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in and out of school and when online through assemblies, the PSHE curriculum and in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Pupils are provided with a range of ways in which to report concerns, including to staff, through the wellbeing boxes or emotional registers. This range of methods is well advertised throughout the school, through lessons and in assemblies.
49. There is an appropriate filtering and monitoring system in place to review all online and digital activity. Leaders review this routinely and take prompt action when any issues arise. Governors regularly check on the effectiveness of this system to safeguard pupils.
50. Leaders and governors ensure that all required pre-employment checks are taken before adults begin working with pupils. Leaders and governors are knowledgeable about the safer recruitment checks that need to be taken and the importance of each of these. They maintain regular and precise oversight of recruitment. All recruitment checks are recorded appropriately on the school's single central record of appointments.
51. Governors maintain an effective oversight of the school's implementation of the safeguarding policy and protocols. They visit the school regularly, reviewing a range of information related to leaders' work. The governors formally review the safeguarding policy and other supporting information routinely.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

**52. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Ewell Castle School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	936/6203
<b>Registered charity number</b>	312079
<b>Address</b>	Ewell Castle School Church Street Ewell Epsom Surrey KT17 2AW
<b>Phone number</b>	02083 931413
<b>Email address</b>	principal@ewellcastle.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.ewellcastle.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ewell Castle School Ltd.
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Colin Griffith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Silas Edmonds
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	606
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 to 29 September 2022

## Information about the school

53. Ewell Castle School is a co-educational independent day school located in Ewell, Surrey, for pupils aged 4 to 18 years old. The school is a charitable trust run by a board of directors. The directors also take on the role of the governing body at the school.
54. The school occupies four sites located near to one another. There is a preparatory school, for pupils in Reception to Year 6, located at Glyn House, Church Street. The senior school, for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is also located on Church Street. The sixth form, for pupils in Years 12 and 13, is based at Chessington Lodge on Spring Street. The fourth site, which provides additional facilities for the sixth form, admissions, and marketing, is based at Fitzalan House, High Street.
55. There are seven children in the early years setting, comprising one Reception class.
56. The school has identified 77 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Twenty-six pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
57. The school has identified English is an additional language for 55 pupils.
58. The school states that its aims are to inspire, engage and excel, encouraging its pupils to thrive in a vibrant, creative and academic environment, whilst also creating opportunities to discover strengths, deepen intellectual curiosity and cultivate their own wellbeing. Further, it sets out to instil a growth mind-set, to develop confidence, contentment and emotional intelligence, through their shared values of personal integrity, mutual respect, social responsibility and lifelong resilience.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

23 to 25 September 2025

59. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The on-site inspection was quality assured.

60. 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 of 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.

61. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

#### **Independent Schools Inspectorate**

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)