

School inspection report

9 to 11 September 2025

Thomas's Battersea

28–40 Battersea High Street

London

SW11 3JB

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. The proprietorial body maintains close links with leaders through visits to the school and discussions with staff, pupils and parents. Together, they are knowledgeable about the school's work and confident that Standards are met consistently. A systematic and robust approach to the management of potential risk supports leaders and staff to understand the importance of identifying and mitigating risk so that pupils' wellbeing is promoted effectively.
2. Leaders set high expectations in all aspects of pupils' school life. Pupils' wellbeing and happiness are prioritised. Consultation with pupils, parents and staff informs leaders' effective evaluation of the school's performance. Pupils' academic and personal development are at the heart of any decisions made. The vision for ongoing school improvement is clear and well-articulated. Pupils achieve well in this nurturing environment.
3. Sources of information, including school policies, are made available to parents. The well-planned and cohesive assessment framework takes account of pupils' academic and wider personal development. The information gathered is closely monitored and shared regularly with parents through parents' evenings and written reports.
4. In the early years, leaders use information about pupils' progress and regular training to inform staff practice. This results in creative teaching and learning that builds successfully on the prior attainment and interests of children. The safe, stimulating environment supports children to develop independence and to become confident learners. These secure foundations are underpinned by well-informed teaching and effective lesson planning. Consequently, children make good progress.
5. A robust system for early identification of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), paired with tailored support from knowledgeable leaders and teachers, ensures that these pupils achieve well. They are well prepared as they transition to secondary school.
6. The well-implemented and broad curriculum, including in the early years, is matched appropriately to pupils' ages and aptitudes. The school's offer is complemented by a stimulating and diverse range of clubs. This means that pupils typically develop a wide range of relevant skills, including in the creative and aesthetic areas of drama, dance and music. Pupils build their self-esteem and confidence as a result.
7. The school fosters positive behaviour through consistent reinforcement of values such as kindness, honesty and respect. Clear expectations, a focus on building trusting relationships and a structured reward system help pupils to understand right from wrong. Pupils are clear about the consequences of misbehaviour and appreciate the incentives to behave well. Pupils are confident that if bullying happens, it is addressed appropriately. They value the school's emphasis on physical health and wellbeing, recognising its positive impact on their behaviour.
8. Relationships and how to manage them effectively are explored in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). This includes an appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) component. Effective promotion of the school's values helps pupils to develop an awareness of their own emotions and those of others.
9. Suitable careers guidance is available, which is age-appropriate and begins in the early years. However, secondary age pupils' access to information about the range of career possibilities is

limited. This restricts their capacity to make well-informed decisions about their future career pathways.

10. Pupils develop an understanding of social responsibility through different opportunities, such as supporting community initiatives. They also hold positions of responsibility in school, for example as prefects and leaders in sports and the arts. This deepens their appreciation of individual differences and develops a sense of service. Pupils are taught about cultural diversity and values such as inclusion, tolerance and respect. This reflects the schools' values, which include kindness, courtesy, respect and humility. These values are very much at the heart of the Thomas's Battersea school experience. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society.
11. Staff, including those with designated safeguarding responsibilities, receive effective training. They are confident to identify and report concerns. Leaders work closely with local safeguarding partners to ensure that pupils' wellbeing and best interests are at the centre of decision-making. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including online, and this safety is supported within the school by an effective internet filtering and monitoring system. Safer recruitment checks are completed systematically and accurately recorded. However, some gaps in pre-employment history were identified. These were due to an administrative error, which was addressed during the 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

The proprietor should:

- ensure that careers guidance takes full account of pupils' strengths, interests and needs, so that they are provided with access to a wide range of sources to support them to make well-informed choices about their future pathways
- ensure that any administrative gaps in employment history are explored promptly as a matter of routine and resolved prior to new staff appointments.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the school's policies and procedures through regular visits to the school and informal discussions with staff, pupils and parents. Consequently, they are knowledgeable about the schools' strengths and what they need to do to continue to improve. Effective scrutiny and challenge support leaders in fulfilling their responsibilities. As a result, they are confident that Standards are met consistently.
13. Risk management is systematic and robust. Leaders and staff understand the importance of identifying and mitigating risk so that pupils' wellbeing is consistently well promoted. There is a suitable risk assessment policy in place, which leaders and staff implement effectively. Appropriate risk assessments and necessary checks are conducted, including for off-site facilities used by pupils, such as sports grounds and outdoor learning sites.
14. Leaders set high expectations, including for pupils' wellbeing and happiness. These high expectations reflect the aims of the school. The school's values are mirrored in the conduct of staff and pupils. Values are signposted in all areas of the school and are fully embedded in teaching. Pupils understand their importance and what each value means. Leaders know the school and pupils well. They carry out effective and well-informed self-evaluation, setting a clearly articulated vision for the school's development. Decision-making is considered carefully in terms of its impact on pupils' academic and personal development. Following surveys of pupils and staff on attitudes to behaviour, for example, leaders adapted the school's behaviour policy. Positive behaviour is now promoted during transitions through the regular awarding of tokens accumulated by house. The revised approach is popular with pupils and staff.
15. Leaders' ambitious intentions for the curriculum are clear. An effective range of school-wide initiatives, such as advanced language studies, promote pupils' academic success. These are evaluated regularly, with changes made as needed. Individual requirements for progression in languages, for example, are supported through bespoke provision and enrichment.
16. Leaders in the early years ensure a safe, stimulating environment through purposeful staff training, supervision and ongoing monitoring. Provision is tailored to each child, prior to them starting school, by drawing on home backgrounds, previous settings and orientation visits. As a result, children's learning journeys are personally relevant. Activities are carefully designed to support shared outcomes and individual progress. Children, for example, explore colour and shape through construction and collage, demonstrating autonomy and creativity. Leaders regularly refine provision, including by upgrading play equipment and aligning staff training with any changes needed. Children are confident to make healthy food choices. They enjoy sociable, risk-assessed mealtimes. Imaginative planning incorporates children's interests, such as cause-and-effect water and musical play with dinosaurs. Well-considered activities foster engagement and curiosity. Risks are collaboratively managed, with accessible records for all relevant staff. High expectations lead to thoughtful curriculum changes and well-informed policy refinement.
17. Leaders promote an inclusive school environment for pupils who have a range of different needs and abilities. This inclusive approach celebrates diversity in the school community. As a result, pupils embrace school values. There is a tangible group sense of building self-worth and supporting the personal development of the individual.

18. Leaders implement an appropriate accessibility plan which they review regularly. Practical adjustments are thoughtfully put in place, such as a wheelchair lift enabling access to the dance studio and art rooms. Careful attention to lighting, acoustics and resources enhances classroom learning. Leaders ensure that the school does not discriminate against any pupils or staff and that it meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
19. All relevant information, including school policies, is made available to parents. A well-planned and cohesive assessment framework covers pupils' curricular and cross-curricular development. This ensure that pupils' progress and skills are tracked and monitored. This information is regularly shared with parents through parents' evenings and written reports.
20. Complaints are investigated thoroughly and appropriately in accordance with the schools' published complaints policy, which includes all necessary information. It follows a three-stage process with specified timescales. Leaders maintain appropriate records of complaints and the actions taken.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders implement a well-planned and suitably broad curriculum. This is well matched to pupils' ages and abilities. It stimulates curiosity, nurtures creativity and develops pupils' academic confidence. Pupils are eager to recount their educational experiences, for example, explaining their independent research and presentation projects about the Romans and Joseph Bazalgette. The curriculum is complemented by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Consequently, pupils develop new interests and skills, for example in art, fencing, judo, running, rock choir, chess, coding and cookery. Their participation enhances their self-esteem.
23. The curriculum includes a focus on creative subjects such as music, dance, drama and art. Learning environments encourage pupils who have different needs to explore interests with enthusiasm. They are inspired to continue their studies at home or in extra-curricular clubs. Pupils gain recognition for their dance, drama, linguistic and artistic talent in national competitions, examinations and scholarship assessments. The drama curriculum allows pupils to develop their skills in, for example, performance, technical backstage skills such as lighting management, set building and prop construction. Pupils are able, for example, to contribute to scene development in Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* and to transform Cinderella by creating a magical scene with ribbons and movement.
24. Leaders use cross-curricular links effectively to strengthen pupils' understanding of concepts and themes across different subject areas. Pupils draw on prior learning, for example by using mathematics to calculate surface area and applying their knowledge of habitats learnt in science to further develop their understanding of the human impact on the natural environment in a geography lesson. In doing so, pupils appreciate and build on the relevance of their wider learning, achieving well as a consequence. Across the school, these links are used purposefully to enhance pupils' understanding of a given subject or topic. They are encouraged to think deeply, for example by applying philosophical enquiry in the humanities. In dance, they explore the theme of explorers by creating body shapes to represent different points on a compass, and choreographing movements to reflect the motion of animals on the plains of Africa.
25. In the early years, children's speech, communication and language development are prioritised. Children are skilfully encouraged to connect prior learning and to explore ambitious vocabulary in their interactions with adults and their peers. They are taught to listen and to think carefully, for example, when discussing how their enjoyment of David Hockney's art is inspiring the pattern on their paper elephant to 'bring it to life'. A well-chosen phonics programme is in place. Knowledgeable and experienced staff deliver the programme. Children enjoy learning and practising the sounds that letters make, as well as practising their writing. They use language confidently. Their communication skills continue to develop as they progress through the school. Consequently, older pupils use complex vocabulary effectively across a range of different writing styles. They build their wider understanding of language construction through lessons in Latin, Greek, French and Spanish.
26. Well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers deliver the curriculum. Lessons take careful and detailed account of pupils' needs, including those of pupils who have SEND. Tailored teaching across disciplines ensures that pupils achieve well, for example, in the challenge activities seen in language lessons, as well as in the high-quality interactions between key adults and pupils in early years phonics and carousel sessions. Overall, teaching supports pupils' good progress. Pupils appreciate the care teachers give to their academic progress, personal development and wellbeing.

27. Leaders promote a robust and positive approach to early identification of pupils' needs. As a result, pupils who have SEND get the help they need quickly. Leaders make effective use of information to develop appropriate individual action plans to ensure that support is matched to pupils' needs. This includes speech and language screening in the early years. Effective use is made of specialist support when required, such as from occupational therapists.
28. The school supports pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) effectively through curriculum planning, consideration of additional resources, implementation of specialist support and culturally appropriate considerations of the backgrounds of the school's vastly diverse community.
29. The school's comprehensive assessment framework ensures that pupils' progress is effectively tracked and monitored. Early assessments of pupils' starting points enable staff to check how well pupils are doing across the year. The comprehensive tracking system is regularly interrogated to ensure pupils are on track. Teachers plan lessons carefully to include meaningful assessment alongside opportunities to reflect on and evaluate prior learning.
30. Teaching actively promotes British values. These values are woven skilfully into lessons and activities, supporting pupils' understanding of principles such as tolerance and democracy. This thoughtful integration helps to prepare pupils for their future lives by encouraging reflection on the values that underpin modern society.

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

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

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

32. Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils typically behave well. The school fosters positive behaviour because of clear expectations, communicated through class charters, consistent rewards and a focus on building trusting relationships. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of new behaviour strategies. They are motivated by the opportunities to contribute to a house-based reward system. The school values of kindness, honesty and humility are consistently well promoted and understood. Pupils know how to distinguish right from wrong. The school supports pupils to understand bullying through effective PSHE lessons and assemblies. Leaders respond quickly and appropriately to any reports of bullying. As a result, pupils are confident that bullying is dealt with appropriately should it occur.
33. Pupils' physical and emotional health is promoted through a wide range of initiatives. Healthy eating is encouraged through positive mealtime routines, rainbow-plate challenges and staff guidance. Children in the early years progress from served and structured food choices to greater independence in older years. Pupils are also able to have their say in shaping provision, and as a result, for example, older pupils now serve their own food. Additional measures to support balanced lifestyles include limiting screen-based homework and offering activities such as running clubs. Pupils across the school enjoy active play and exploration. Age-appropriate risk-taking, for example on adventure play equipment, is supported by vigilant supervision and clear routines.
34. Pupils value the school's emphasis on promoting physical health through its physical education (PE) programme. They know that active participation impacts positively on their behaviour. Adults plan suitable activities which help children in the early years to develop their physical skills successfully. In addition to PE lessons that develop hand-eye co-ordination, outdoor activities, such as playing with bicycles, support the children to develop their wider co-ordination, physical strength and teamwork skills. Music and dance contribute to their physical wellbeing and emotional regulation.
35. Leaders prioritise sport and outdoor learning, embedding it in the school's culture through strategic planning and high-quality provision. Pupils benefit from well-structured lessons, expert coaching and access to off-site facilities. They develop knowledge and skills to represent the school in competitive fixtures successfully. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and engaged and demonstrate a clear passion for sport. In skills sessions, they respond well to teachers' guidance, building co-ordination and technique. As a result, pupils develop confidence, skills and teamwork through meaningful sporting experiences.
36. Relationships and how to manage them effectively are explored in PSHE. The programme's age-appropriate RSE component has a positive impact in helping pupils to develop a secure awareness of their emotions. For example, in a PSHE lesson, pupils responded thoughtfully to questions about achievements they were proud of and recognised the emotional responses they received in a way they had not considered before.
37. Leaders' decisions are deeply rooted in the school's values. These are consistently modelled well by staff and embedded across all aspects of school life. From the early years onwards, pupils are nurtured to be inquisitive, thoughtful and caring. They develop appropriate moral understanding through daily routines, assemblies, philosophy sessions and outreach initiatives, such as volunteering at a community hub for older residents. The school's ethos fosters kindness, respect

and spiritual awareness, enabling pupils to express gratitude, curiosity and empathy confidently. Structures supporting emotional and physical wellbeing ensure that pupils feel secure and valued, while inclusive practices such as weaving relationships education through PSHE, science and the humanities promote mutual respect and an understanding of diversity. Pupils grow into kind, generous and socially responsible individuals, with a clear moral compass and a sense of self, consistently demonstrating the values instilled through the school's well-considered approach to education.

38. Leaders demonstrate a consistent and thorough understanding of health and safety requirements. A systematic approach ensures that the school premises and accommodation are safe, secure and well maintained. Effective oversight includes regular maintenance schedules and compliance with relevant legislation. Risk assessments are appropriately conducted and inform safe practices, including for occasions when evacuation procedures may be needed.
39. Suitable arrangements are in place for pupils who become unwell during the school day. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid, ensuring prompt and appropriate care. Supervision across the school is well-planned and effective, with adult-child ratios consistently maintained in the early years. Pupils' safety and wellbeing is thoughtfully supported throughout the day. Leaders create a secure and nurturing environment where pupils' health and safety are prioritised. Pupils know they are safe, cared for, and able to engage fully in their learning.
40. Leaders maintain suitable admission and attendance registers which contain all required information. They ensure that the local authority is informed when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard transition points. The school's attendance champion monitors and evaluates attendance information, taking appropriate action when required.

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

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

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

42. Leaders promote the linguistic and cultural richness of the school community. Pupils learn to appreciate diversity. They build confidence for life in a globally connected world. Celebrations of community festivals, assemblies, church services and visual displays reinforce mutual respect for individual differences. Through theology, philosophy and ethics (TPE), PSHE lessons and daily interactions, pupils learn key values such as individual freedom and respect for the beliefs of others. This supports the principles that underpin British democracy. Pupils articulate the importance of these values in fostering a tolerant society, as well as in their understanding of the need to protect individual rights.
43. Parents and older pupils actively engage with the school, providing workshops for pupils on different religious festivals such as Diwali, Eid and Hanukkah. Consequently, pupils learn about and better understand their diverse community. Individual differences are also explored through assemblies, and visiting speakers who share lived experiences, including what it is like to live with disabilities. This means that pupils understand the consequences of discrimination. Calm, supportive adult guidance nurtures empathy, independence and a sense of community between pupils, who consistently demonstrate care and support for one another.
44. Pupils enjoy meaningful responsibilities that impact positively on the school and the wider community. The school's vision for pupils to be, in its own words, 'givers, not takers', is reflected in initiatives such as the transformation of a neglected stairwell. Pupils, staff and parents turned this into a collaborative mural, demonstrating pupils' social responsibility and creativity. The success of this project led to outreach work with local maintained schools, further highlighting pupils' commitment to improving shared environments. Leadership roles, including prefect positions in dance and art, enable pupils to engage in community projects such as leading dance sessions and painting murals in partner schools. Pupils also help organise fixtures for local schools, reinforcing their role as active contributors beyond the classroom. Additional leadership structures, such as rotating lower school leaders and an active school council, empower pupils to influence change within the school.
45. Pupils are well prepared for entry into appropriate senior schools. As a result, they are confident about their next steps. In the early years, pupils are introduced to jobs in the local community by inviting 'local heroes' into school, such as firefighters and the police. This develops children's understanding of vocational careers in the community. Through a series of 'world of work' talks, pupils learn about and reflect on the aspirational career paths of parents and other visitors to the school, including authors, a chief executive officer (CEO), a photographer and doctors. However, for pupils in Years 7 and 8 there is limited exposure to a wider and more diverse range of career possibilities. Consequently, pupils are restricted in their ability to make relevant and informed decisions about their future, or to appreciate a wider variety of roles that may be available to them.
46. The well-considered curriculum promotes pupils' social and economic wellbeing and contribution to wider society. In the early years, children begin to develop financial awareness through imaginative role play, such as running a café, where they learn about money and exchange in a playful context. As pupils progress, they deepen their understanding of financial concepts. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils explore income, taxation and inflation, while in PSHE they reflect on global economic disparities, including the challenges faced by developing countries. These

experiences culminate in practical, community-focused projects such as designing a garden. Pupils apply their financial knowledge by budgeting for materials such as wood and plants, demonstrating both economic understanding and social responsibility.

47. The school's core values, including being calm, courteous and kind, are well embedded. A consistent and supportive framework guides pupils' behaviour and decision-making. This is reflected in the low levels of misbehaviour across the school. Through carefully planned opportunities, leaders promote pupils' respect for one another, personal responsibility and a wide-ranging appreciation of rights and responsibilities, including the rule of law.
48. Pupil leadership initiatives offer pupils examples of how leadership fosters civic engagement and inclusion. Leaders ensure pupils understand democratic principles through activities such as classroom voting. This helps them to understand the role of democracy in society.

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

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

Safeguarding

50. Leaders maintain a thorough approach to safeguarding throughout the school. Pupils' safeguarding and wellbeing are prioritised. Leaders regularly review the school's safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure that they reflect current statutory guidance. The proprietor provides systematic oversight of the school's safeguarding practice, including through annual reviews and audits. External audits provide further guidance and reassurance that leaders have the knowledge and skills required to meet the Standards.
51. Leaders ensure that all staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibilities, receive appropriate and regular training aligned with current guidance. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of safeguarding practices. They are confident to recognise and report concerns. Safeguarding is a standing item in weekly pastoral meetings. Staff are kept informed through their own weekly briefings.
52. Safeguarding records, including those linked to pupils' attendance, are accurate, comprehensive and securely maintained. Effective systems ensure that no child is missing education. Communication between the school and local authorities on safeguarding matters are comprehensive, including when pupils move schools outside of normal admission points. Leaders ensure that designated staff are given the time and responsibility to ensure accountability in these processes. This leads to a culture of vigilance and consistency. Those staff with responsibility consult appropriately with local safeguarding partners to protect children from the risk of harm, including through referrals to children's services. Leaders are confident to work closely with local authority officers to ensure pupils are safe.
53. In the early years, staff adhere to specific safeguarding expectations relating to working with young children. Supervision ratios are compliant and supported by high staff visibility across the site. Leaders interact with children. They are easily identifiable. Consequently, children know where to seek help when they need it. In the early years, procedures for intimate care and toileting are sensitively managed, balancing children's privacy and independence with safeguarding protocols. Parents and visitors to early years are reminded to follow the school's policy for digital devices. Staff are required to lock away their mobile phones during the school day.
54. Pupils are taught about personal safety, including staying safe online. The school implements a robust filtering and monitoring system which manages all school devices. Pupils understand the increasing online risks and how the school is educating them to keep safe when online at school and at home.
55. Staff carry out all safer recruitment checks systematically. These are accurately recorded on the school's record of pre-employment checks. However, gaps in pre-employment history were identified during the onsite inspection. This was due to an administrative error and this was rectified prior to the end of the onsite inspection.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Thomas's Battersea
Department for Education number	212/6401
Address	Thomas's Battersea 28–40 Battersea High Street London SW11 3JB
Phone number	020 7978 0900
Email address	battersea@thomas-s.co.uk
Website	thomas-s.co.uk
Proprietor	Thomas's London Day Schools
Chair	Mr Ben Thomas
Headteacher	Mr Rupert Hawkins
Age range	4 to 13
Number of pupils	543
Date of previous inspection	12 to 13 October 2022

Information about the school

57. Thomas's Battersea is a co-educational independent day school. It is part of Thomas's London Day Schools, which is a limited company. The original school was founded in 1971 and moved to its current site in 1990. The school comprises lower, middle and upper school sections. Since the previous inspection, it has changed its upper age range from 15 to 13. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
58. There are 61 children in the early years, across three Reception classes.
59. The school has identified 152 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
60. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 169 pupils.
61. The school states its aims are to foster a strong set of values, with kindness at the heart. It encourages pupils to become 'givers, not takers,' with a strong sense of social responsibility and readiness to contribute positively to society.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

9-11 September 2025

62. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The on-site inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

63. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- 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.

64. 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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