



RYDES HILL

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

GUILDFORD



Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
Inspection Report 2011

DEAR PARENTS AND PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

It gives me very great pleasure to present you with our most recent ISI Inspection Report which took place during the week beginning 20th June 2011. I am delighted to report that we gained the top rating in every category in both the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in the Main School.

In the EYFS the Ofsted rating 'outstanding' is used for the top category while in the Main School the ISI rating 'excellent' is used for the top category. We gained 'excellent' and 'outstanding' (which have equivalent top ratings) in every category. I am sure you will enjoy reading the report; some key quotes are as follows:

THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

"The pupils' achievements, attitudes and skills are excellent." "Results in National Tests at age 11 have been excellent." "Pupils' personal development is excellent as is their behaviour." "The teaching is excellent." "pupils are keen to learn and they make excellent progress." "Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent."

"Pupils' spiritual development is very strongly underpinned by the Catholic ethos of the school and the excellent role models provided by staff and senior pupils." "The pupils' moral awareness is excellent." "The social development of pupils is outstanding."

"The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are excellent and reflect the very high quality of pastoral care at the school."

"The governance of the school is excellent." "The quality of leadership and management is excellent, ensuring that the aims of the school are met successfully."

"Links with parents are excellent. Through the Friends Association, parents are encouraged to be involved with the life of the school and they take a very active role."

"Parent responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive and reflect their very strong satisfaction with the school. They are particularly pleased with their children's progress, the way the school communicates with them and its promotion of Christian values."

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

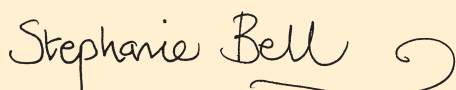
"The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding in all areas and the aims of the school are met exceedingly well." "Leadership and management are outstanding."

"staff/pupil ratios are excellent. Relationships in all areas of the department are excellent" "They (the parents) are extremely happy with the provision and the amount of information they receive." "The quality of the provision is outstanding."

"The outcomes for the children in the EYFS are outstanding. They make excellent progress in their learning."

If you have not yet visited Rydes Hill Preparatory School and Nursery, I invite you to email or telephone to book a personal tour to see our unique, happy family school in action on any school day.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Stephanie Bell M.A. (Oxon)
Headmistress

RYDES HILL



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

RYDES HILL PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Rydes Hill Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Rydes Hill Preparatory School
DfE Number	936/6049
Registered Charity Number	299411
Address	Rydes Hill Preparatory School Rydeshill House Aldershot Road Guildford Surrey GU2 8BP
Telephone Number	01483 563160
Fax Number	01483 306714
Email Address	admissions@rydeshill.com
Headmistress	Mrs Stephanie Bell
Chair of Governors	Mr Bernard Stevens
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	169
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (28 boys; 141 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 65 5-11: 104
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Elaine Connor
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	21 Jun 2011 to 22 Jun 2011

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in May 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Rydes Hill is a Catholic preparatory school, which was founded in 1945 and transferred to a charitable trust administered by a board of governors in 1989. Situated in the suburbs of Guildford, the school is based in a Georgian house augmented by more modern buildings. The school welcomes children of all denominations and its ethos is rooted in Christian values. The school aims to develop academic success within a caring family atmosphere and to ensure good links between home, school, parish and local community. It also sets out to encourage happiness, tolerance and the recognition of personal dignity, providing a well-balanced education in a disciplined and purposeful learning environment.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection the school had a total of 169 pupils on roll, 65 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and 104 in Years 1 to 6. The school takes boys, currently 28, from the ages of three to seven and girls from the ages of three to eleven, and caters for pupils from a range of ethnic and social backgrounds. The school has identified seven pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), all of whom receive support and there is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs (SEN). Seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), but they do not require additional support. From the results of standardised tests, the ability profile of the school is above the national average although the ability range is wide.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, there have been major improvements to the buildings and facilities, including a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite, a performing arts studio and expansion in the areas used for the EYFS.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School NC name	
Nursery	Nursery
Kindergarten	Reception

Preparatory Department

School NC name	
Lower Transition	Year 1
Upper Transition	Year 2
Lower Preparatory	Year 3
Middle Preparatory	Year 4
Higher Preparatory	Year 5
Form One	Year 6

‘This is an exceptional school; the children flourish and thrive.’

Parent

'A very family focused school that is accepting of all faiths.'

Parent

'As always, we have been overwhelmed by our daughter's achievements whilst at Rydes Hill and continue to be amazed by the results achieved for all pupils.'

Parent

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The pupils' achievements, attitudes and skills are excellent, fulfilling the aims of the school, to provide a well-balanced education in a disciplined and purposeful learning environment. The pupils show very good knowledge and understanding in their work. Pupils read and write intelligently and fluently, and demonstrate a wide vocabulary. They are very articulate and develop their creative skills through the wide-ranging curriculum. Well-developed numeracy skills, and the ability to think critically, enable them to solve problems. They demonstrate a logical approach to investigation in science and use their developing ICT skills very well to produce some outstanding cross-curricular work. Standards in the arts and physical activities are high.
- 2.2 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in national tests at age eleven have been excellent when compared with the national average for maintained primary schools. This level of attainment, as also seen in lesson observations and in pupils' written work, shows that pupils of all abilities make at least good, and some make exceptional, progress to the age of eleven in relation to pupils of similar ability. Year 6 pupils successfully gain places at local independent selective schools, with a significant number gaining scholarships.
- 2.3 Pupils are very happy and contented and their overall success is promoted by the effective teaching, by their own very positive attitudes, and by the breadth and demands of the curriculum and extra-curricular experiences. Their personal development is excellent, as is their behaviour. They develop confidence and enjoy their school life. Pupils with LDD and SEN make notable progress. This is linked to the high priority the school gives to meeting their needs and the effective support provided for them. Their progress is seen through their increased competence in English, mathematics and reading as seen through their work. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are very well supported through challenge in lessons.
- 2.4 A stimulating curriculum inspires pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning and prepares them very well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum has been extended with increased use of ICT, more emphasis on the teaching of personal, social health and citizenship education (PSHCE), and more crosscurricular working with the extended use of topics. There is a wide range of subjects but some imbalance exists in the time allocation for specialist subjects. The extracurricular programme contributes imaginatively to the pupils' development. This programme includes recent visits to Windsor Castle, where the pupils were fortunate enough to see the Queen and the Pope during his visit. The range of other activities includes visits to art galleries, theatre and historical venues. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in residential visits. The extra-curricular activities in school include clubs both during the lunchtime and after school.
- 2.5 The teaching is excellent. Class teachers and subject specialist teachers have excellent subject knowledge and they plan lessons that are interesting and lively. As a result pupils are keen to learn and they make excellent progress. Staff have high expectations and pupils are consistently challenged to work to their full potential.

Opportunities for speaking and listening through paired work are used very effectively in developing pupils' ideas and enabling them to be confident and articulate. Through careful assessments, teachers have a clear understanding of their pupils' abilities and progress and plan lessons to meet their individual needs. Support staff are well deployed for the benefit of pupils, particularly those who need extra guidance. Teaching is well paced and a wide variety of teaching methods, including the effective use of ICT, are employed. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and as a result pupils are very responsive to instructions, confident to ask and answer questions and offer their views. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is impeccable and as a result lessons are brisk with no interruptions. They present their work carefully, demonstrating the concentration and effort they put into it. Both the pupils and the staff take pride in presenting the work, which is very attractively displayed both in the classrooms and around the school, celebrating achievement.

- 2.6 Overall, assessment is very regular and thorough, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' progress and highlighting areas for improvement. The teaching makes very good use of national tests and standardised assessments, so that the abilities of the individual pupils are very well known and their needs specifically identified in the lesson plans and met in the lessons. The school has identified that the formal assessment of pupils on entry to Key Stage 1 is not yet as helpful as it could be. Marking is good and pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.7 Pupils' personal qualities, throughout the EYFS and the school, are developed very well and in accordance with the mission statement, 'to please God in the way we behave by loving one another and being a good example to others by being obedient and kind'. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are a major strength.
- 2.8 Pupils' spiritual development is very strongly underpinned by the Catholic ethos of the school and the excellent role models provided by staff and senior pupils. They reflect very well in, for example, regular Masses and assemblies. Pupils enjoy singing, drama and music as shown at a rehearsal for Annie. Their moral awareness is excellent. Pupils are made aware of the needs of others and regularly hold charity fund-raising events.
- 2.9 The social development of pupils is outstanding. Opportunities to interact collectively appear naturally within classes, during lunch where pupils sit in house groups, and during playtimes. Year 6 pupils spoke very warmly of the school as a family and a spirit of mutual consideration was observed in lessons. Pupils are confident, courteous and curious. They know each other extremely well across the school and their personal development is aided by very effective pastoral arrangements, which foster a strong sense of community. Pupils' cultural awareness is strongly developed and is enhanced by an appreciative approach to cultures within the school. Cultural traditions and customs are identified and valued, as seen in a display of African art or in the exchange of pen-pal letters with pupils in Kenya. Pupils learn about English institutions through visits, PSHCE lessons and through the student council and debating society.
- 2.10 Welfare, health and safety matters are addressed assiduously through the comprehensive range of robust policies, fully implemented across the school. The procedures to safeguard pupils are rigorous with all staff trained to the appropriate level for their responsibilities.

'Your ability to individualise educational and developmental needs of your pupils and to deliver the utmost care to each and every pupil is second to none.'

Parent

'The truly committed teachers have unlocked my daughter's potential and awakened a passion for learning and a desire to excel.'

Parent

Our daughter has thoroughly enjoyed the wonderful opportunities to take part in Music, Drama and Dance. The standards of Ensemble Music and Speech & Drama are extraordinary for such a small school.

Parent

Rydes Hill has given our daughter a love of learning and spiritual and emotional strengths for the years ahead.

Parent

Procedures for fire prevention are thorough and carefully documented and reviewed. The school is vigilant in carrying out health and safety checks and appropriate risk assessments are undertaken. Staff are trained in first aid and all accidents are recorded accurately. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are excellent and reflect the very high quality of pastoral care at the school.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.11 The governance of the school is excellent; the governing body shows great commitment to the school's strategic development and effective oversight of financial and property matters. The committees on the governing body reflect the vision of the school leadership, especially in relation to academic standards and the excellence of its pastoral care. The governors have very good insight into the day-to-day running of the school through frequent visits.
- 2.12 The quality of leadership and management is excellent, ensuring that the aims of the school are met successfully. The ethos and spiritual values of the school are appropriately backed up by policies and procedures which are effectively implemented. The staff are very well supported by senior and middle leadership. Staff are appropriately deployed, and an effective appraisal and monitoring system is used. The school has rigorous staff appointment procedures. All staff are checked for their suitability to work with children and the information is held very efficiently on the single central register.
- 2.13 The premises and accommodation are very good. The buildings are attractive, support the education of the pupils well and kept in good decorative order. The extensive grounds are used effectively for sports teaching.
- 2.14 Links with parents are excellent. Through the Friends' Association, parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school and they take a very active role. They have a very good range of relevant information through publications and the attractive website. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive and reflect their very strong satisfaction with the school. They are particularly pleased with their children's progress, the way the school communicates with them and its promotion of Christian values. Reports are detailed and provide useful information for parents, who receive them twice each year.
- 2.15 The school complaints procedure is thorough and any concerns are dealt with well.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standard Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Implement the planned assessment of the pupils' learning at the beginning of Key Stage 1.
 2. Resolve the imbalance of time allocation to specialist subjects.
 3. In the EYFS provide additional opportunities for play in the fenced areas adjacent to the classrooms and extend the imaginative use of the grounds.

‘As parents whose daughter has been at Rydes Hill for seven years, we have been delighted with the school. The support and enthusiasm of the Head and all the staff at Rydes Hill has been spectacular and, because of the school's relatively small size, the atmosphere really is like that of a close-knit family. Our daughter really has had the most wonderful start to her school career at this outstanding school.’

Parent

‘Our daughter has had a wonderful time at Rydes Hill and will treasure fond memories of the school, her teachers and her friends there forever.’

Parent

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

‘ Rydes Hill Preparatory School is a truly special and wonderful place for children to learn and develop. ’

Parent

4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding in all areas, and the aims of the school are met exceedingly well. All children are very well supported by the staff, who create a welcoming and caring learning environment where children and families are highly valued. High expectations and a clear understanding of the uniqueness of each child, and their differing needs and abilities, explain the significant progress made by all the children in their learning and development so that their individual needs are very well met. The planning for improvement, the self-evaluation process and the capacity for continuous development are outstanding. Since the previous inspection, planning has improved and there has been more parental involvement in their children’s work through attending workshops.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Those concerned have a clear, ambitious vision and have identified priorities for continuous improvement. Regular planning meetings ensure that this vision is put into practice. All relevant policies, procedures and risk assessments are exemplary, so that children are very well safeguarded and equality is promoted. Children are very well safeguarded and equality is promoted. The teaching staff and assistants are well qualified, trained in safeguarding and staff-pupil ratios are excellent. Relationships in all areas of the department are excellent and communication with the parents is very good. They are extremely happy with the provision and the amount of information they receive.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. The children are supported very effectively to learn and develop both by their own staff and by specialist teachers. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, with planned sessions for purposeful play both inside and outdoors. Teaching is based on very good knowledge of how children learn and progress, and it provides extremely well for a range of abilities. Assessment through observation is rigorous, and the information gained is used effectively to guide planning and target next steps. The classrooms are bright, spacious and very well resourced. The fenced outdoor play areas adjacent to the rooms are enjoyed by the children. They contain some useful resources but insufficient areas to stimulate and develop the children’s learning, and the grounds are not used to their full potential to enrich the children’s work and play. Effective planning is constantly reviewed to meet the individual child’s needs. Staff encourage the children to follow routines of hygiene, such as washing their hands before meals, and they are taught to move around the setting carefully, showing concern and respect for the safety of others. Staff look after the children very well, promoting their welfare, health and safety as high priorities, including regular checks of the environment.

‘ Rydes Hill is such a warm and friendly school with incredibly committed staff who ensure that all pupils reach their fullest potential. ’

Parent

4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.4 The outcomes for the children in the EYFS are outstanding. They make excellent progress in their learning with nearly all attaining the Early Learning Goals in all areas and many working beyond them. They make very good progress in their writing, with some writing short sentences, and use numbers confidently, for example recognising and ordering numbers up to and beyond twenty. They think critically and solve problems, as well as confidently sharing their thoughts and ideas. The children are articulate and many display a high degree of maturity. They are enthusiastic learners and demonstrate well-developed concentration. They listen eagerly and respond well to instructions. They work well independently and in groups. They are aware of the need for good hygiene, healthy eating choices and physical activity to keep healthy. They know how to keep safe. Many are developing very good ICT skills and show awareness of the wider world through their role-play and at playtime. They share well and know how to be a good friend, as seen in the Nursery where children worked very well together to build a tower 'taller than one of the children'.

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

‘ Rydes Hill has not only helped our son settle but has also helped him grow and mature in intellect and character. ’

Parent

‘ The Rydes Hill family will have a special place in the hearts of our children as it also does in ours. ’

Parent

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

'The children stand out as being extremely happy, polite and accomplished.'

Parent

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jill Bainton

Reporting Inspector

Mr Peter Nicholson

Head, IAPS school

Mrs Kirsten Jackson

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector

'Rydes Hill fosters an extraordinary ethos where the children delight in each other's success.'

Parent



RYDES HILL

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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