

School inspection report

5 to 7 November 2024

Rydes Hill Preparatory School

Aldershot Road

Guildford

Surrey

GU2 8BP

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

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

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have developed a school characterised by their three ambitions of thinking deeply, living wisely and loving generously. Rydes Hill Preparatory School successfully equips pupils with the necessary skills, knowledge, confidence and understanding to embrace the challenges which they encounter and showcase their talents.
2. Leaders use a detailed understanding about pupils' daily experiences to undertake high quality evaluation of what works well and what needs to improve in the school. They use this evaluation to bring continual improvements in provision. Effective oversight of the school's operations is provided by the board of governors. They visit the campus regularly, question school leaders appropriately and scrutinise key pieces of documentation to ensure the Standards are met.
3. The school's curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. It succeeds in meeting the needs of pupils in all parts of the school through accommodating their different ages, aptitudes and prior attainment. Teachers deliver lessons characterised by high academic expectations. Appropriate provision is made to meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, pupils make good progress and are well prepared for their secondary schools, including entrance assessment tests.
4. Leaders have developed an effective programme of personal, social, health and economic education throughout the school. It includes appropriate content in areas such as relationships education, consent, and personal safety both in the physical world and when online. Pupils understand how to manage money effectively and have opportunities to form their own businesses. They also understand the importance of physical and mental fitness. They capitalise on various health-related opportunities made available to them, including a wide range of sports and optional clubs. The school's behaviour code and anti-bullying strategy are effective at promoting harmonious relationships between pupils.
5. Pupils value the importance of diversity, within both the school community and the world at large. They understand the importance of preventing discrimination and prejudice, treating each other with mutual respect, and appreciate the significance of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty in society. Pupils in the oldest year groups accept responsibilities which enable them to hone their leadership skills and work collaboratively with staff and leaders to develop and improve the school. However, opportunities for younger pupils to benefit from similar experiences are limited.
6. The school communicates with parents effectively and maintains a detailed and informative website. A previous report from the inspectorate had been removed from the website but this was resolved during the on-site inspection. As a result, all required information was freely available by the time the inspection concluded.
7. Leaders ensure that safeguarding measures to promote the welfare of pupils and protect them from harm fulfil the requirements of the latest statutory guidance.

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:

- develop opportunities for younger pupils to contribute their ideas about how the school could be improved, including, where appropriate, through the school council
- ensure that all necessary information is made available as required, including all school inspection reports published from January 2015 onwards.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders take a diligent, comprehensive approach to school self-evaluation and development. They use a range of evidence, including from lesson observations, pupil surveys and scrutiny of work. They consider the views of the entire staff team and use this evidence to create well-considered, detailed plans. Governors review and approve these plans.
9. Leaders maintain scrupulous oversight of the daily running of the school. They are judicious and pertinent in their use of carefully selected training materials and opportunities for their staff team. They ensure that all adults have the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
10. School policy documentation is thorough, extensive and implemented properly. A rigorous programme is used by middle and senior leaders to ensure the work of the school is completed, monitored and developed appropriately. Effective action is taken should shortcomings be found.
11. Leaders of the early years are experienced and knowledgeable. They undertake a thorough self-evaluation and routinely review how they can continue to improve provision within the setting. For example, leaders' regular reviews of planning check that children's learning is effective and that resources are of high quality. This has led to recent improvement to extend the play area which is allowing more opportunities for children's physical development and outdoor learning.
12. The governing body contribute a range of professional expertise, insight and wisdom in their supervision over the school. Through a programme of visits, including the annual governors' morning, written reports, meetings with pupils, committee meetings and whole board discussions, governors gain accurate and comprehensive understanding of pupils' first-hand experience of school life. Governors' activities include clear, regular audits of safeguarding and health and safety matters alongside frequent tours of the site. Documentation, such as the single central record of appointments, pupil behaviour log, complaints file and accident book, is analysed. Consequently, governors successfully ensure that the Standards are met.
13. All necessary information is available to parents, prospective parents and other stakeholders in line with the Standards. This is achieved through regular correspondence, including a detailed annual report on each pupil that is supplemented with interim grade cards and target sheets. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the sharing of information concerning education, health and care (EHC) plans with the local authority as required, including that related to finance. The school has a detailed and informative website. However, one of the previous inspection reports was not available on the website at the time of the inspection. This was rectified during the inspection.
14. Leaders have made links with a variety of other local and national agencies, both as sources of advice and guidance and as mechanisms for extending the opportunities made available to pupils. Examples include the local authority's department for children's services, the school's professional association, a "deanery" cluster group of seven local Roman Catholic primary and secondary schools and the Catholic Education Service in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.
15. Leaders, staff and governors take all reasonable action to manage risks posed to pupils. Leaders are aware of particular risks faced by the school, including those associated with its geographical location and the demography of the community which it serves. Appropriate practices have been put in place to mitigate these. Staff members are effectively trained in how to write risk

assessments, which are monitored regularly and revised as factors facing the school evolve. All school trips are risk assessed, as are key areas of school that have an effect on physical or mental health. For example, a risk assessment about stress considers both pupils and adults and examines factors both within the school and outside it.

16. The school implements a suitable policy for the management and resolution of complaints. It is compliant with all requirements and accurate records are kept.
17. A thorough and effective accessibility plan is implemented. This, together with the clear respect shown by the whole community towards diversity and the lesson planning protocols which ensure all pupils can access the teaching and learning being undertaken, means that the school fulfils its requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders adapt and extend the National Curriculum to meet the needs and interests of pupils. Planning across a wide range of subjects uses opportunities to link different areas and incorporates an appropriately diverse range of themes and topics. As a result, pupils become well prepared for their future lives, including the process of sitting entrance examinations to their next schools. Speaking and listening is given a high profile. Pupils have many opportunities to perform, such as class assemblies, school-wide productions, re-enactments of historical events on special theme days, and leading acts of worship.
20. Teachers' expectations are aspirational. Lessons are appropriately pitched and use information from the school's comprehensive assessment programme to challenge and extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers simultaneously ensure that pupils receive appropriate support whenever necessary. As a result, pupils apply effort, act responsibly and make good progress. They score highly in assessments, including national externally validated tests. Pupils are successful in gaining entry to a range of secondary schools, frequently achieving academic, music, sporting, drama or all-round scholarship awards.
21. Teachers use their comprehensive subject knowledge to ensure lessons are well planned and organised. They create activities which use a well-considered, wide range of resources, including both individual and whole-class applications of technology. Pupils are excited by their learning and keen to learn more. For example, when undertaking a series of linked practical experiments on a common scientific focus in quick succession, they make careful observations, analyse new experiences and, consequently, broaden their knowledge, understanding and skills.
22. A robust system is in place for identifying those pupils who have SEND. Pupils receive timely help and support through individualised planning which includes suitably amended tasks, pertinent use of specific resources, and intervention programmes. Additional adults within classrooms provide appropriate support and guidance. Leaders work appropriately with external agencies, including the local authority. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities for pupils in receipt of an EHC plan.
23. Leaders and adults provide effective support to ensure pupils who speak EAL can access the curriculum and learn effectively alongside their peers.
24. Teachers inform parents of pupils' progress and achievements in annual detailed written reports, supported by grade cards and consultation events that focus on reviews of individualised targets.
25. Appropriately qualified and skilled staff deliver programmes of activities to the youngest children. Adult interactions enable children to develop language and communication skills. Teachers provide well-planned activities to help children gain the necessary early skills for literacy, such as structured and lively teaching of sounds, together with story reading opportunities. Leaders are knowledgeable in assessing children and are vigilant to any additional needs. Leaders seek the advice of, and work with, various external services including occupational and speech and language therapists, as appropriate. Children's early learning needs are very well met. They become active, inquisitive learners who show resilience and independence.
26. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities made available to them in breaktimes and after school. These include a variety of clubs including fencing, Mandarin, hip-hop street dancing and digital skills.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

28. Pupils rise to leaders' expectations that they will treat each other kindly and courteously, always 'showing knowledge of, and respect for, those from different lifestyles, backgrounds, faiths and beliefs. The school is a harmonious community. Daily acts of worship and reflection are used by teachers to discuss wider issues about a range of issues such as friendship. Collective worship is used to explore how love increases when it is shared. These opportunities develop pupils' understanding of spirituality, kindness, respect and care and a common understanding of morality is reinforced.
29. Children in the early years show respect for each other. They are confident around adults in the setting and feel safe, secure and happy. Children are gently reminded by staff about how to share possessions and they learn to play together harmoniously. Committed staff reassure children when they show hesitancy towards an activity, responding very effectively to each child's needs in a sensitive and caring manner. A wide range of opportunities for children to be active in their daily routines ensures that physical development is promoted successfully.
30. Pupils appreciate the genuine interest that teachers hold in their lives and wellbeing, both inside school and in the wider world. This is achieved through regular, purposeful affirmatory discussions about both academic and social matters. Pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence increase. Pupils have confidence to request clarification on matters or making errors; they feel safe to embrace mistakes as opportunities to learn.
31. Pupils behave well and comply with the school's clear expectations of appropriate conduct, including its effective anti-bullying strategy. They know that unfortunate actions result in reflection time in which they think through what has happened, decide what they would do differently in future and make a written record of their conclusions. Consequently, they learn from their mistakes and the school's characteristic harmonious community is maintained.
32. Pupils take part in the frequent, varied opportunities available to engage in physical activity. There are timetabled sessions of sports such as gymnastics, cricket, football, netball and swimming every week and these are supplemented with a range of optional clubs like ballet, fitness and yoga. Pupils become aware of the importance of keeping healthy and enjoy physical exercise. They learn that healthy eating is important, know that the sensible choices they make at lunchtime should be replicated outside school and appreciate how the school kitchen has recently reduced the amount of sugar that it uses.
33. Teachers introduce pupils to a range of strategies, such as breathing activities, feelings boxes and well-timed exercise breaks, from which they select their own preferred approach to maintain positive mental health. Pupils are confident in talking to members of staff, including the emotional literacy support assistant, whenever they need assistance with a concern. Pupils also use the "feelings box" and "worry monster" provision in place when they find it helpful to put their anxieties in writing.
34. The school's thorough and comprehensive life skills programme, which covers topics of personal, health, relationships and sex education, has been carefully planned by leaders and revisits areas appropriately as pupils grow and mature. The programme is informed by appropriate consultation with parents both during its creation and its ongoing revision. The school sends further timely

communications to parents about the content of these lessons, including the right to withdraw pupils as appropriate. The curriculum and teachers' delivery of these lessons have a positive impact on pupils' understanding as matters such as choices, consequences, responsibilities and consent are explored. The insights which pupils make into their personal development become very sophisticated and are shown in older year groups' creation of lengthy pieces of writing on mature topics such as substance misuse.

35. Leaders undertake all appropriate checks on the school site. Due attention is paid to health and safety matters, including those checks related to fire safety. The school premises and accommodation, including suitable provision for the administration of first aid and the provision of medication, are well maintained. Pupils are supervised appropriately in all activities, including playtimes and breaks.
36. The school maintains admission and attendance registers in line with current requirements. The necessary procedures are followed to inform the local authority should pupils leave or join the school at non-standard transition points.

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

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

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

38. Leaders organise a programme of events which simulate some of the human, social and economic challenges which they anticipate pupils will encounter during their future lives. This includes talks from representatives of various careers, including a forensic scientist and the coordinator of city-centre soup kitchens. As pupils collaboratively reflect on these experiences, teachers encourage them to make practical application of the school ambitions: they “think deeply, live wisely, and love generously”.
39. Children in the early years are given many opportunities to learn social skills through co-operative play, the creation of games and by observing how others interact. Staff model the positive behaviour that they expect of pupils, showing kindness and respect towards each other. Children are supported and encouraged to show good manners at all times and are praised when they do this.
40. Leaders ensure that protected characteristics are actively promoted throughout the school's curriculum, including a sequence of whole-school theme days dedicated to particular topics such as Indian culture and heritage. As a result, pupils talk confidently and knowledgeably about how to avoid discrimination and cherish the varied interests, talents, backgrounds and passions to be found within the school community.
41. Pupils learn about how Parliament and the Government work, including how laws are made, and understand the importance of the rule of law. Consequently, they gain a thorough understanding of how society functions. For example, many pupils discuss maturely and eloquently how they feel that democracy and individual liberty are interconnected and co-dependent.
42. All pupils in the oldest year group are elected to positions of responsibility such as house captain, sports captain, eco team representative and performing arts monitor. Leadership skills and initiative are encouraged within these roles, such as the head girl team liaising with staff to develop and deliver a whole-school day themed around wellbeing. A school council is in place to extend mechanisms for leaders to source the views of pupils. However, opportunities for members of younger year groups to participate and make suggestions for school improvements are limited.
43. Leaders provide high quality economic education through their life skills programme. Topics covered include budget management, income and expenditure, interest and the financial responsibilities that come with parenthood. The curriculum is enhanced by a visiting speaker from the financial services industry and opportunities for pupils to visit a local bank. Pupils appreciate both the need to earn money and the wisdom of saving. For example, pupils launch their own businesses, such as making and selling dog biscuits and manufacturing environmentally friendly accessories. They learn about profits, and the importance of reinvesting in their enterprise.
44. Pupils appreciate the role charities play in society and welcome opportunities to help others, including in the local community. The range of opportunities that enable pupils to engage with members of the school's local community is growing. As examples, the youngest children visit a nearby care home, and the school invites members of the community to share in events such as performances and the carol service.

45. Appropriate steps are taken by the school to ensure the suitability of visiting speakers' presentations, including balanced perspectives on political issues being presented to pupils.

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

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

47. Leaders implement comprehensive protocols and procedures, accurately detailed in a suitable policy. They are effective in producing a robust whole-school culture which safeguards pupils, protects them from harm and prioritises their wellbeing.
48. Leaders and staff receive thorough and pertinent training, both at induction to the school and in regular refresher workshops. Leaders monitor staff attendance and understanding. They provide appropriate catch-up repeats as necessary to ensure coverage is both complete and effective. As a result, all staff are confident, well-informed and use effective processes when a safeguarding matter arises.
49. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and has comprehensive oversight of safeguarding matters within the school. She completes training that is regularly updated in line with requirements. Appropriate use is made of the three similarly well-trained deputy safeguarding leads. They act in a timely manner to support vulnerable pupils, including seeking advice from a range of appropriate external agencies, including the local authority, whenever necessary.
50. Leaders follow a careful process for the appointment of staff, including when roles are advertised and candidates are shortlisted and interviewed. Required checks on staff are completed in a timely manner and detailed accurately in the school's record of appointments.
51. Through their learning in the curriculum, including in the life skills programme, pupils gain a thorough understanding of how they can keep themselves safe, both in the physical world and when online. Pupils understand the importance of voicing concerns to a trusted adult. They know why it is important to protect their personal information when online and recognise that this includes their image.
52. Procedures for filtering and monitoring internet content are robust. Weekly reports are sent and scrutinised weekly by the safeguarding team, who take appropriate action when required.
53. The proprietorial board oversees all safeguarding provision. Governors maintain frequent and regular contact with leaders, including visits to the site, when they undertake detailed scrutiny of key records and documentation. Written reports following these activities form part of the governors' safeguarding review process. Governors provide appropriate challenge and support to the headteacher and other members of staff, to ensure that all reasonable action is being taken to keep pupils safe.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Rydes Hill Preparatory School
Department for Education number	936/6049
Registered charity number	299411
Address	Rydes Hill House Aldershot Road Guildford Surrey GU2 8BP
Phone number	01483 563160
Email address	office@rydeshill.com
Website	www.rydeshill.com
Proprietor	Rydes Hill School Guildford
Chair	Mrs Maureen Adams
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Norville
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	146
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 November 2021

Information about the school

55. Rydes Hill Preparatory School is an independent day school for girls aged between two and eleven and boys aged between two and seven, located in Guildford, Surrey. It was founded in 1945. Since 1989, the school has been a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Since the last inspection, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed.
56. The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting of 59 children; 42 of these are divided between three Nursery classes, and 17 are in the single Reception class.
57. The school has identified nine pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
58. English is an additional language for 26 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to develop individual talents by encouraging and challenging pupils to be the best that they can be, empowered by the skills they need to navigate the world using high standards, sound moral judgement, kindness and decency. As an inclusive Catholic school, the school aims for pupils to learn to live in a loving relationship with God and each other as values of love, justice, faith, courage, hope and perseverance are fostered.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

5 to 7 November 2024

60. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

61. 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 and other governors
- discussions with the head, 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.

62. 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

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

For more information, please visit isi.net