



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ROEDEAN SCHOOL  
INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Roedean School

Full Name of School	<b>Roedean School</b>	
DfE Number	<b>846/6006</b>	
Registered Charity Number	<b>307063</b>	
Address	<b>Roedean School Roedean Way Brighton East Sussex BN2 5RQ</b>	
Telephone Number	<b>01273 667500</b>	
Fax Number	<b>01273 676722</b>	
Email Address	<b>info@roedean.co.uk</b>	
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Frances King</b>	
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Christopher Jonas</b>	
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>	
Total Number of Pupils	<b>388</b>	
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>119</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>269</b>
	Full:	<b>269</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>	
Inspection dates	<b>22 Mar 2011 to 23 Mar 2011</b>	

## 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.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in March 2009 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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.

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills	2
The quality of the pupils' personal development	3
The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	4
<b>3 ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	5
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	5
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>6</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Roedean School aims to provide a stimulating education and exciting extra-curricular opportunities in an environment which is supportive and friendly. The pupils are encouraged to be self-reliant, explore their talents, strive for excellence, and to exercise their place within the wider community of the school. Predominantly a boarding school for girls between the ages of eleven and eighteen, Roedean also welcomes day pupils and integrates them fully into its boarding houses. The school is controlled by a board of trustees referred to as its Council. Founded in 1885 by the three Lawrence sisters, the school is situated in extensive grounds on the edge of Brighton overlooking the English Channel. The founders' original aims were to give emphasis to physical and outdoor education and 'to give as much liberty as can be granted with safety'. Over the years the school has developed a more international character, with pupils from forty-nine different nationalities and eighteen religious faiths.
- 1.2 Since the last inspection the school, through amalgamation, has extended its age range to include both boys and girls in the junior (5 to 11) age range and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). These age ranges, with only a small number of pupils, are shortly being discontinued and this report focuses wholly on the senior school. Within this part of the school at the time of the inspection there were 388 pupils on roll encompassing Years 7 to 13. The school has 269 full boarders. Overseas pupils are from a range of countries, including locations in Europe and the Far East, whilst day pupils come from the south coast of England. Pupils' families are largely in business or the professions.
- 1.3 The ability profile of pupils in the senior school aged from eleven to sixteen is above the national average, with most pupils having an ability that is at least above average. The ability profile of the sixth form is also above the national average, but with a wider spread of abilities than in the rest of the senior school. At the time of the inspection, 63 pupils had been identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), but there were no pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school had 196 pupils whose first language is not English, of whom 89 were receiving support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 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 table:

School	NC name
U3	Year 7
L4	Year 8
U4	Year 9
L5	Year 10
U5	Year 11
Six One	Year 12
Six Two	Year 13

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

- 2.1 Girls' achievement is good overall and for some it is outstanding. Consequently, the school meets its aim of promoting academic excellence as part of the broader context of education. Considerable success in examinations is combined with real enthusiasm for learning across the wide range of activities provided. Pupils have considerable linguistic skills and a strong grasp of mathematical concepts which enables them to be confident in oral work, to write analytically and to apply mathematics in subjects such as chemistry and physics. There was evidence of pupils' creativity and sensitivity in a number of lessons. Notable examples were seen in art and English. Practical work is carried out skilfully: in a Year 12 physics lesson pupils were confident in planning an electrical investigation and in beginning to take measurements using standard equipment independently. On leaving the school, substantial numbers gain places at their first choice of university.
- 2.2 Outside the classroom and the laboratory pupils gain considerable success in examinations in music, speech, drama, various types of dance and sport. Individual pupils have excelled in hockey, tennis, netball and sailing. In discussion, pupils talked with great enthusiasm about their individual participation in the myriad of aesthetic and sporting activities that are open to them.
- 2.3 The following analysis uses the national data for 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE mathematics and sciences have been higher than international norms and similar to UK norms, where the benchmark is higher. A-level performance has been far above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress from Years 7 to 11 is above the average for pupils of similar abilities. Results at A level have been high in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress through the sixth form is exceptional when compared with the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with LDD and those for whom English is an additional language make progress in all years, but especially in the sixth form, in line with other pupils. Both pupils and parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the academic progress that is made.
- 2.4 Pupils' attitudes to their work are very positive. They are very attentive in class. Work in exercise books is diligently completed and of good quality. Older pupils become adept at organising the balance between the work they do in lessons and their other activities and so become independent. One such pupil interviewed summed things up by describing the school as a "can-do" society where it was important to take part enthusiastically. In these ways the school is successful in its aims of encouraging self-reliance and of pupils exercising their place in the school community.
- 2.5 Pupils' progress is supported by a wide ranging and stimulating curriculum enhanced by an outstanding range of other activities. The programme for preparing the girls for their lives beyond school is comprehensive. The sixth form in particular appreciate the knowledge gained from the programme of outside speakers,

particularly those from universities. Personal development is supported by a wide range of courses in personal, social and health education (PSHE), including the new (2010-11) sixth-form programme in Year 12 which covers wellbeing, global citizenship, presentation skills, research skills and business ethics. The library is well stocked and staffed. It supports all aspects of the curriculum and enables pupils to pursue individual study. There is very good provision for the development of written and spoken English, particularly for those for whom English is an additional language.

- 2.6 Good teaching assists pupils and provides support for their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils respond well to them. In the better lessons observed a wide variety of strategies kept pupils engaged. Very occasionally, the pace faltered, limiting what was achieved by the end. Lessons and activities had clear objectives and structures and the objectives were usually achieved. Books are regularly marked but, with some exceptions, the marking seen was largely congratulatory. It rarely provided advice on how work could be improved. Nevertheless, suitable policies have been developed for assessment for learning, monitoring and targeting. These policies have begun to be implemented but target setting is not fully integrated into the assessment process and the impact on achievement is not yet strongly evident.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.7 Pupils' overall personal development is excellent, and pupils show a personal maturity which is outstanding for their age. They are appreciative of the circumstances of others. Many are sensitive to the non-material aspects of life as was evident in a discussion of the tenets of Buddhism. The integrated house system strengthens the development of the spiritual, moral and social aspects of pupils. This is evident in the way the older girls provide support for younger ones in the same house. Pupils from a wide variety of cultures live comfortably together. Through their lives in the school, pupils have developed a wide understanding of cultural differences. In discussions, they show a strong respect for each other and listen carefully to each other's contributions. Activities are initiated by the girls themselves, notably in the sixth form. Older pupils revealed an unusual confidence, independence and expertise in their work in fundraising, the running of the school magazine, and in representing the student voice both within the school and beyond.
- 2.8 Excellent pastoral care was acknowledged in the extremely positive comments in both parents' and pupils' questionnaires. Girls believe that house staff care for them as individuals, and that there are always adults to whom they can turn. The girls' behaviour around the school is good, and mutual respect in the classroom is evident. The pastoral structures include ready lines of communication, including to parents and guardians, and the overall provision is well co-ordinated. In the pupils' questionnaires some raised concerns about how well the school responded to their views, the fairness of teachers and the extent to which workloads were monitored. However, in discussions with inspectors these points were not substantiated, and in the case of student voice it was very clear that through explicit training on how to participate in meetings the school had done much to improve the efficacy of the school council.
- 2.9 The school's child protection policy and procedures are clear, detailed and comprehensive; all staff have received appropriate training. Arrangements for health and safety are comprehensive and effective. Arrangements for pupils who are sick are in order. School meals are nutritious. Pupils' health and fitness are supported

by an extensive programme of activities. The school has taken appropriate steps to increase access to the site where possible for disabled pupils.

- 2.10 The boarding arrangements are good. Pupils reiterated that the house staff form the fulcrum around which their life in the school turns. In their questionnaire responses pupils overwhelmingly reported that they enjoy boarding and that it helps them develop as people.

### **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.11 Governance is exercised by the Council of Trustees and is excellent. The Council provides the school with excellent leadership, giving it a clear ethos and sense of identity. Members set strategic goals, secure financial targets and monitor key issues well. Senior staff appreciate the way members are involved with all aspects of strategic planning. Members are well informed of the school's successes and issues. They provide effective advice and support and a strong range of experience and expertise which are carefully focused on the school's improvement and development. The Council has a well chosen range of committees designed to facilitate in-depth discussion. Members understand and exercise properly their responsibilities for the welfare, safeguarding, and health and safety of the pupils. Their commitment is appreciated by parents.
- 2.12 Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features evident. The headmistress provides authoritative, strong and sensitive leadership with a clear vision for the future of the school. Strong support in promoting the vision is provided by the senior leadership team. The teaching staff are well qualified and fully committed to the girls' education. Equally, the school's support staff show a strong commitment to the school and ensure effective management of the buildings and the facilities. Both groups join together in meetings to advise on management, as was seen in a discussion on staff appraisal. All staff receive appropriate regulatory checks before appointment and the school's centralised register of appointments meets the requirements. The accommodation, facilities and resources are of good quality and used effectively for the girls' benefit. The school has a well thought out and structured strategic development plan which aims to improve teaching and learning by developing the way teaching and assessment is monitored. The school has positively responded to the recommendation of the 2007 report to develop the monitoring of the work of subject departments but, as acknowledged by the school, more work remains to be done.
- 2.13 The school maintains excellent links with parents and guardians. Parents are appreciative of how well the school keeps them informed. The school meets requirements about the dissemination of information, and there is an appropriate complaints policy.

### **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 Standards Regulations 2010.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Fully apply the assessment policy to ensure that pupils' targets are integrated into the assessment process so as to further improve the standards achieved.
  2. Ensure the implementation of the system for monitoring teaching and learning so as to enable existing best practice to be applied across the teaching staff.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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 deputy chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and an assembly. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Dr Stephen Grounds

Mrs Annabelle Hancock

Mrs Judith Kearney

Reporting Inspector

Assistant Reporting Inspector

Former Director of Studies, HMC school