



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Rupert House School

January 2020



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School's Details

School	Rupert House School			
DfE number	931/6003			
Registered charity number	309648			
Address	Rupert House School 90-92 Bell Street Henley-on-Thames Oxfordshire RG9 2BN			
Telephone number	01491 574263			
Email address	office@ruperthouse.oxon.sch.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Lynas			
Chair of governors	Mr Charles Lowe			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	164			
	EYFS	40	Juniors	124
Inspection dates	14 to 16 January 2020			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Rupert House School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. The school was founded in 1924 as St Joan's School and changed its name when moving to its current location in 1930. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school comprises two sections: pre-prep, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for pupils aged 3 to 7 years; and prep, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. The majority of pupils are female.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new chair of governors.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to deliver excellent opportunities for every pupil and high standards through what it intends to be inspirational lessons delivered by specialist teachers. It seeks to offer excellent pastoral care and to prepare pupils for life beyond the school.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a ten-mile radius of the school. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 20 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyscalculia, and other conditions, 18 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 16 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 20 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 39 other pupils because of their special talents in art, physical education and games, music and drama.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate exemplary attitudes towards learning and achievement.
 - Pupils exhibit highly sophisticated communication skills for their age.
 - Pupils' attainment is outstanding. They make excellent progress across the school.
 - Pupils' academic and non-academic achievements are outstanding.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils across the school show substantial self-confidence and self-awareness.
 - Pupils' social skills are excellent.
 - Pupils exhibit outstanding moral sensibilities and behaviour.
 - Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of how to stay safe and look after their own mental and physical well-being.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:
- Strengthen the consistency of pupils' learning and progress by enabling pupils, including the most able, to always explore what they are learning in as much depth as possible.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils exhibit exemplary attitudes towards learning and achievement in all parts of the school. Children in the EYFS demonstrate excellent curiosity and highly positive attitudes, as seen in the strong focus and concentration they sustained when creating construction block vehicles for toy animals. Older pupils show strong engagement and a wish to achieve highly. For example, in a house meeting attended by pupils from a range of year groups, all the pupils were keen, enthusiastic and confident to join in the 'Hakuna Matata' singing activity and perform the song as well as they could. Similarly, in other lessons such as physical education (PE), English and mathematics, pupils from different year groups were absorbed and eager to learn. Pupils' positive attitudes are promoted by teaching which is highly enthusiastic and characterised by high expectations.
- 3.6 Pupils exhibit extremely proficient communication skills. Their reading, writing, and comprehension are advanced for their age. Children in the EYFS speak confidently and articulately to each other as a result of the constant rich dialogue modelled by staff. Older pupils speak fluently in an articulate and assured manner. For instance, pre-prep pupils were able to use extensive vocabulary and well-developed speaking skills to summarise the story of *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch* using advanced language such as 'industrious'. Older pupils are able to verbalise sophisticated ideas and points of view. For example, pupils were able to spontaneously identify metaphors and the use of alliteration in poetry, such as 'the moon was a ghostly galleon', as well as other literary techniques such as repetition. Pupils could explain articulately the impact on the listener of these literary techniques. The oldest pupils' writing is of a high quality and variety, and demonstrates excellent use of literary techniques, imaginative vocabulary, and strong progress over time.
- 3.7 Pupils' achievement is excellent overall. From the available evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, and the school's own assessment data, pupils' attainment in English is well

above, and attainment in mathematics above, in relation to national age-related expectations. EYFS children, including those of both genders and those who are summer born, have consistently achieved well above national age-related expectations at the end of the Reception year over the period 2013 to 2019. School data also indicate that EYFS children progress well from their starting points. An overwhelming majority of parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables pupils to make progress. This perspective is supported by inspection evidence. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books show that a high rate of progress is typically maintained across the school, including by pupils with SEND. However, the learning and progress of pupils is sometimes slowed during the few times when the tasks and activities available to them do not enable pupils, including the most able, to explore what they are learning in as much depth as possible. Pupils are highly successful in obtaining places at the destination schools of their choice. The school fully meets its aim to prepare pupils for life beyond the school.

- 3.8 Pupils' academic and non-academic successes are outstanding. Leavers are successful in obtaining a wide range of academic, sports, art, and all-rounder scholarships, among others. Pupils consistently attain high grades in external speech and music examinations, and individual pupils achieve success in local art competitions and perform in local music and drama events. In sports, pupils have achieved success at county level cross country and in matches against other schools in hockey and netball. Pupils have also achieved at a high level in the UK and local Maths Challenges. Pupils' successes in these areas are supported by highly effective specialist teaching and the strong emphasis placed on arts and sports by leadership and governance. The school fully meets its aim to deliver excellent opportunities for every pupil.
- 3.9 Pupils, including the most able, show the ability to carry out independent research highly effectively. They are able to draw upon prior knowledge and wide range of resources and apply what they have learnt and to achieve very successful outcomes. This was illustrated by the excellent individual projects by Year 5 pupils on pollution, where each project clearly utilised the pupil's own strengths, interests and skills. Pupils are also capable of in-depth evaluation of their own work, such as the money containers they created in design and technology (DT) lessons. This is because thinking and learning skills are taught throughout the school and promoted by leadership and staff through the *Rupert House Values* and *Prep School Bacculaureate*. However, the periodic use of worksheets with limited space sometimes serves to restrict the depth and range of pupil's research findings.
- 3.10 Pupils' numeracy skills are excellent. Their mathematics books show pupils working beyond their age, as shown, for example, in work on aspects of mathematics such as ratios, multiplication, and area. In lessons, pupils are able to explain how they solve mathematical problems. For example, younger pupils made excellent progress in a lesson on number bonds and were able to add a third number and identify correctly which number bonds applied. Year 6 pupils were able to clearly explain the methodology that they had chosen to use to work out sophisticated angle problems accurately. This is because teachers typically offer a high level of challenge and expect pupils to explain their reasoning. Teachers give pupils clear explanations should they get their answers slightly wrong, and marking often provides pupils with clear guidance about what to do to improve their work.
- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding beyond their age. For example, younger pupils' work demonstrated their ability to ask incisive questions to challenge and extend their own understanding, such as 'How are Saturn's rings made?', 'Why is the sun so hot?', and 'How are meteors made?' Similarly, in a humanities lesson, older pupils drew from a wide range of sources and displayed sophisticated study skills for their age when analysing data, images, maps and text in a topic on settlements. Pupils' strong knowledge and understanding are supported by the many opportunities for pupils to explore their subjects in detail and depth.
- 3.12 Pupils demonstrate proficient information and communication technology skills (ICT). Their work includes well-produced presentation slides with hyperlinks and highly effective use of visual images. Pupils apply their ICT skills very well to other subjects across the curriculum. For instance, in a physical education (PE) lesson, older pupils used slowed down video recordings of their progressions to identify

for themselves where improvements could be made. The ability of pupils to use ICT effectively was particularly evident in a project by Year 6 pupils' use of a specialist application to create a film for a national charity.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils across the school show substantial self-confidence and self-awareness. Nursery and Reception children exhibit very confident behaviour, indicating strong emotional security, and were seen to be entirely at ease in the EYFS setting. Pupils demonstrated confidence in their own abilities in all lessons seen. Older pupils' books contain thoughtful self-reflection on their individual achievements, strengths and areas to develop. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors were confident enough to offer thoughtful and considerate reflections on the way their character had developed while they had been at school and how their individual confidence had developed strongly as a result of their experience of the school. The strengths of pupils' self-confidence and resilience owes much to the encouragement that leaders and staff give them to 'have a go' and not be anxious about making mistakes. Leaders and staff support the development of pupils' confidence by explicitly recognising and rewarding pupils for valuable attitudes. For example, one display contains examples of how individual pupils have been praised for demonstrating understanding, courage, resilience, respect and creativity. In addition, in many lessons seen, pupils' self-assuredness was supported by the warm and welcoming manner of the teachers, and the calm and positive atmosphere that pervades the school. An overwhelming majority of pupils and most parents in the questionnaire agreed that the school helps pupils to be confident and independent.
- 3.15 Pupils' social skills are excellent. Children across the different EYFS classes spontaneously shared resources and activities with each other with great enjoyment, clearly demonstrating delight in each other's company and mature social behaviour. Pupils worked together extremely well in lessons seen. For example, younger pupils worked collaboratively together on a game of skittles to produce addition equations. They corrected and advised each other respectfully to ensure that they achieved the learning objectives. Similarly, in a PE lesson, older pupils created routines supportively and co-operatively with each other, demonstrating excellent teamwork and listening to each other's ideas. Pupils' social skills are of high quality because leaders and governors have successfully embedded high expectations of social behaviour which are in turn modelled and promoted by staff.
- 3.16 Pupils exhibit outstanding moral sensibilities and behaviour. Those who spoke to the inspectors explained the importance of kindness and of looking after others in an articulate and heartfelt fashion, giving examples of how they and other pupils had spontaneously helped other pupils in the school when they were feeling low or lonely. In English, pupils offered very thoughtful ideas about the moral character of the protagonists in the poem *The Highwayman*. Pupils referred to the school's 'learner values' and explained how these had influenced their behaviour and sense of moral responsibility for the better. During the inspection, pupils' wholly positive behaviour demonstrated that they are respectful of their peers and adults and take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- 3.17 Pupils exhibit a clear understanding of how to stay safe and look after their own mental and physical well-being. For instance, Year 4 pupils' work on food poetry includes many sensible references to nutrition and the importance of healthy eating. In a PE lesson, older pupils ensured that their movements were carried out with much care to make certain that these were safe for themselves and others nearby. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors explained the importance of sleep, exercise and good diet towards physical health. They also explained how they used breathing techniques learned through 'mindfulness' lessons to reduce anxiety and calm themselves down when preparing for assessments and examinations. Other pupils were able to share sensible advice about how to stay safe when using the internet. An overwhelming majority of pupils in the questionnaire said that they knew how to stay safe online.

- 3.18 Pupils contribute strongly to others in and beyond the school community. Pupils confidently explained what their responsibilities as house captains were, and demonstrated strong enthusiasm for taking responsibility for arranging house musical and other events and activities. Sports captains explained how they organised sports to ensure that everyone could take part equally and would feel included. Pupils also support charities of their choice with a deep appreciation of the importance of their work and enormous consideration of others. This was demonstrated by pupils who explained why they had chosen to support a particular bereavement charity in a way that exhibited great tenderness and substantial empathy for those that the charity aimed to support.
- 3.19 Pupils show strong spiritual awareness. Pupils explained how they considered different ideas about God in a way that demonstrated thoughtful reflection, as well as respect for different religions and faiths. Pupils also exhibit a genuine appreciation of non-material aspects of life, as seen through the care taken over work on colour, music, art and poetry. For example, Year 6 art books show a strongly developed sense of colour and composition, as well as evident appreciation of the work of artists such as Constable, while the 'sea poetry' produced by Year 5 pupils is highly evocative and shows strong appreciation of the expressive form. Year 2 pupils' work includes strongly expressed appreciation of how, in pupils' words, 'everyone is amazing and different' and deserves to be valued.
- 3.20 Pupils demonstrate and express entirely inclusive attitudes and strong appreciation of those with faiths and cultures different to their own. In interviews, pupils explained how they enjoyed comparing ideas from different religions, that pupils who had different beliefs to each other got on well and that 'everyone has different gifts, but we all use these to help other people'. All pupils and parents in the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.21 Pupils demonstrate a strong ability to reflect on their decisions and make decisions that are likely to benefit themselves and others. For example, a display of EYFS children's new year resolutions demonstrates individual aspiration, while older pupils' books contain thoughtful self-reflection on personal targets and understanding. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors were able to voice articulate ideas about the types of decisions they made to best prepare for assessments, examinations and interviews, as well as behaviour they decided to adopt to look after their own well-being.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house and form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Steven Popper	Reporting inspector
Mrs Carrie Askew	Compliance team inspector (Head of administration and compliance, IAPS school)
Mrs Tania Botting	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)