INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

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Rookwood School

Full Name of School	**Rookwood School**			
DCSF Number	**850/6011**			
Registered Charity Number	**758856**			
Telephone Number	**01264 325900**			
Fax Number	**01264 325909**			
Email Address	**head@rookwood.hants.sch.uk**			
Headmistress	**Mrs M Langley**			
Chair of Governors	**Mr Stewart Jenkinson**			
Age Range	**3 to 16**			
Total Number of Pupils	**331**			
Gender of Pupils	**Mixed (151 boys; 180 girls;)**			
Numbers by Age	0-2:	**0**	5-11:	**128**
	3-5:	**21**	11-16:	**182**
Number of Day Pupils	**304**		Capacity for flexi-boarding:	
Number of Boarders	Total:	**27**		
	Full:		Weekly:	
Head of EYFS Setting	**Miss Victoria Meinel**			
EYFS Gender	**Mixed**			
Inspection Dates	**16 Mar 2010 to 17 Mar 2010**			

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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 2006.

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 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

(a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
(b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
(c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
(d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
(e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
(f) The premises and accommodation
(g) The provision of information
(h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard 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.

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 July 2009 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

1.1 Rookwood School aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to all its pupils, encouraging them to perform at their best in all their activities. The school aims to provide a safe, happy and relaxed atmosphere in which pupils are free to develop both play and learning. The school strives for an ethos of self-discipline and self-esteem, coupled with courtesy and consideration, to enable pupils to work both independently and as part of a team. The school is a Christian school welcoming pupils from all faiths, and governed by an educational trust.

1.2 Rookwood is a non-selective, co-educational school, which was founded, as a girls' school, in 1934, and moved to its present eight acre site on the outskirts of Andover in 1946. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is in a purpose built block, and takes children aged three to four on a part or full-time basis; all children attend full time once they move into the Reception class. The setting at present has 21 children altogether.

1.3 The school has overseen considerable building development in recent years, including a sports hall due to be opened in April 2010. Management structures have also changed, with the three sections of the school – Pre-Prep, Prep and Main School - each having its own assistant head.

1.4 The total number of pupils on roll is 331, made up of 151 boys and 180 girls. EYFS has ten girls and eleven boys; Years 1 to 6 have 75 boys and 53 girls, and the senior school has 74 boys and 108 girls. Twelve boys and fifteen girls board.

1.5 The ability profile of pupils up to Year 6 is in line with the national average, while the ability profile in the senior school is above it. A few pupils come from ethnic minorities, of whom fifteen speak English as an additional language, although all are fluent in it. The majority of parents have professional, farming or service backgrounds. The school has two pupils who have statements of special educational need. Twenty-six pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) receive specialist learning support from the school.

1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

2.1 Academic achievement is good. Results in GCSE examinations over the past three years have been high when compared with the national average for all maintained schools. These results represent good progress over time in relation to the ability of the pupils. Two Year 11 pupils were among the top four candidates in ISA schools for GCSE achievement, and one won the Whitbread Award for the highest scoring candidate. In mathematics competitions in recent years, three pupils have won places in the qualifying rounds for entry to the Olympiad team. A high level of achievement is also observed in lessons, where in response to teachers' questions and in written work, the pupils show that they know their subject matter well.

2.2 The quality of learning is good. Pupils work well together, they listen attentively, concentrate on the tasks in hand, contribute to lessons and readily ask questions to clarify their thinking. They enjoy written, practical work and class discussion. Pupils persevere to achieve success. Many have a high level of mathematical skill and, in class, are able to express their points of view and ideas very clearly. A number of pupils express enthusiasm in using ICT and they demonstrate a strong level of knowledge and skill. However, in some lessons where use of ICT could have aided subject learning, pupils were hampered by a lack of computers in each classroom.

2.3 The quality of teaching is good. It is well organised, with an emphasis on GCSE examination requirements in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan lessons well, give careful instructions and set tasks to enable pupils to achieve success and gain confidence. In the best lessons, effective questioning draws out pupils' understanding, encourages them to reason and enables them to apply what they know to new situations. Setting is used in some subjects in the senior part of the school to assist all pupils to make progress in line with their abilities. In some areas, pupils experience a range of tasks, but in other cases there is a lack in the variety of approaches and an insufficiently high level of expectation. Much marking of pupils' work is methodical and helpful, the best giving pupils very clear guidance for future improvement of their work. The teachers give very useful individual help both during and outside lesson time, and LDD pupils are generally well supported with specialist help. Teaching is enhanced by a good programme of baseline testing and tracking to assess and monitor pupils' progress.

2.4 The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes an effective programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education. The range of extra curricular activities is good, and accessible to all pupils. Participation and individual achievement are held in high regard. Study visits, trips and competitions further enrich the pupils' experience in a number of areas including science and modern languages. Pupils are well prepared for their future education and work.

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The quality of the pupils' personal development

2.5 Personal development is excellent and pupils are courteous and polite. They have high levels of self-esteem, self-knowledge and self-confidence resulting from the widespread support available from staff. They take great pride in their school and the value placed on everyone's contribution. They respond enthusiastically to the school ethos of compassion, becoming very involved in charity fund raising. Moral development is strong as seen in Year 11 where pupils were able to discuss altruism effectively in an English lesson. Social development involves strong respect for others, and is encouraged further by regular visitors from different groups. Pupils enjoy their widespread responsibilities, whether as prefects, house captains or members of the effective school council. Year 6 pupils run a library club and Year 11 prefects help to supervise a weekly assembly in the senior school. Pupils have a keen awareness of other cultures and make the school a welcoming community, including to visitors from other faiths and ethnic groups. Boarders can influence decisions which affect them and their questionnaires show their enjoyment of boarding and its value to their personal development.

2.6 Pupils' development is enhanced by excellent pastoral care. Pupils flourish in the environment of care and respect provided for them, also shown by the provision of a regular counselling service. Older pupils take responsibility for helping Year 7 pupils settle into the senior school through their buddy system and younger pupils are confident that 'no bullies would get away with anything'. Class charters are frequently referred to in the preparatory school, the Golden Rules are clearly displayed in the pre-preparatory school and pupils commented that they felt they all respected each other, and all felt there were adults they could readily turn to if they wished.

2.7 Welfare, health and safety are very well looked after. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding pupils, and in first aid; the school has a full-time nurse. The school kitchen provides delicious, nutritious and well balanced meals and the oldest pupils play a central role in supervising at lunchtimes. Fire precaution, safeguarding and recruitment policies are all well maintained, and all registers are appropriately kept. The school has a suitable three-year access policy for pupils with disabilities. The pupils in Year 2 showed a clear understanding of how to 'keep fit' in a physical education lesson and pupils throughout the school know how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. Although current changing facilities are basic, they are very well maintained and supervised and the completion of the new sports centre in April 2010 will provide first class facilities.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

2.8 Governance of the school is good. All governors are trustees, and between them they cover a range of appropriate disciplines, though lacking in professional expertise in education; the appraisal of the headmistress also lacks any input from an appraiser professionally involved in education. All trustees have a close understanding of the school, and monitor it appropriately. Parents of former pupils and one parent of a current pupil, are among the trustees, which helps them to have a thorough grasp of school issues; the five year development plan which trustees have drawn up gives a clear indication of future development. Trustees are effectively involved in financial and strategic planning, and in the provision of generally good accommodation, and human and material resources. The school has nominated governors for both child protection and EYFS, which ensures that all

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areas of the school, and especially the whole area of safeguarding children, receive good oversight from governors.

2.9 Leadership and management are good, and effective in forwarding the school's aims to help pupils develop to the best of their ability, growing in self-confidence and self-discipline. The headmistress runs the school supported by a deputy and heads of the three individual sections. This team has given the school a strong management structure, enabling effective oversight. The school does not have a departmental or subject leadership structure, and thus few teachers are appraised or led by a specialist in their subject. In the senior school this has a limiting effect on the efficiency with which the content of the subject teaching can be monitored.

2.10 Policies and procedures have been produced for most areas of the school, and are appropriately implemented by staff. Teaching staff are well deployed, and make a big contribution to the pupils' welfare. Pupils with LDD are identified to all staff, although some parents, in their questionnaire, were somewhat unhappy about the school's provision for these pupils. Inspectors saw little special provision for them in mainstream classroom lessons, although several pupils with LDD commented on the good progress they had made through specialist support.

2.11 Levels of staffing are good, and the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils are important to all staff, who implement their responsibilities with care. A centralised register records the fact that all recruitment checks are properly carried out on all staff and governors when they are appointed.

2.12 The school has a good complaints policy, which has not been formally invoked in the last three years. Informal complaints are usually dealt with promptly, and appropriately recorded. In their questionnaire, parents raised very few concerns, though a few would like to see improved communication with the school. Reports are sent out regularly, and parents evenings take place once a year, but some parents felt that they did not have enough information about their child's progress. Inspectors agreed that some reports did not contain individual, specific targets for improvement. Many parents expressed satisfaction with the curriculum, and with the attitudes and values the school promotes. Pupils, also, expressed overall satisfaction with the school, and particularly with the fact that they can play a role in the school, and are encouraged to work independently.

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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 2003, as subsequently amended.

3.2 The school's provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and no action was required.

(ii) Recommended action

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Use a greater variety of approaches in teaching, particularly to give greater stimulus to the more able pupils.
2. As funds permit, increase the provision of computers throughout classrooms, so that pupils may have ready access in their general lessons.
3. In the EYFS, continue to think creatively about playtime resources and zoning of the playground area to create more choice and opportunity
4. In the EYFS, develop ICT provision

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4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

(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 EYFS setting is non-selective and provides a warm, friendly, caring atmosphere. It aims to provide a breadth of experience in a stimulating, secure, friendly purpose built environment and succeeds as the overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding with a sense of inclusivity and family community. The curriculum is fun and child-centred and children's ideas, individual needs and interests are developed and extended through a variety of sensory and investigative experiences. Achievement is closely monitored from entry into Nursery, when a baseline of attainment is produced in the *Busy Bee* development profiles. Most children are working within the age-related expectation. A mixture of assessment is used and progress and attainment discussed formally, in communication meetings, and informally, through daily discussion, photographs and jottings. The Reception children have well documented profiles which track progress reflecting significant milestones and key moments informing the EYFS profile. Secure systems and thorough risk assessments are in place to ensure that children's welfare is promoted at all times when using the indoor and outdoor spaces. As identified in the self evaluation form continuous improvement and investment is planned for this area.

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

4.2 The quality of leadership and management is good. A newly appointed EYFS co-ordinator, also the named safeguarding officer is developing these new roles. Leadership and management is based on self-evaluation and a developing vision; it provides an ambitious strategy and development plan that underpins all areas of the EYFS. Highly motivated staff work together seamlessly to implement detailed policies effectively and securely. Staff ratios are excellent and all staff are suitably qualified, accessing continuous training which has enabled them to manage risk and build effective partnerships with parents and the wider community. Responses from the questionnaire, informal interviews, parent chats and communication diaries unanimously show just how favourably the parents regard the school in every respect. They appreciate the genuine warmth and good standard of education and care; they believe the school is providing the best possible start for their children. Parents valued the way staff made them feel welcome and all spoke of the team's dedication and commitment. Parent partnership and communication are outstanding. Workshops, planning boards, parent notice boards, visual timetable, newsletters and displays of photographs encourage parents to involve themselves fully in their child's learning.

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

4.3 Since the last inspection resources, outside facilities and partnership with parents have significantly improved. The school provides a highly stimulating and vibrant learning environment in which every child can thrive. Good quality resources and creative use of space enable the staff to plan purposeful and challenging learning and play experiences effectively both inside and out. Reception children demonstrate an understanding of number and use mathematical language to order and sort. Nursery children play with money in the shoe shop and match pairs of boots and shoes. The story corner and imaginative books that the Nursery children have made are shared together and celebrate their love of books and attainment in literacy. Reception children enjoy making dinosaur fossils, dinosaur bones from art straws and enjoy 'lets go dinosaur hunting' role play. Nursery children use computer software independently to reinforce their phonic knowledge; however, equipment and resources in this area are insufficient. The EYFS team have also identified that Reception children have limited access to the outdoor area for free flow play. Play times lack the structure, resourcing and zoning that would improve the quality of experience.

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

4.4 Attainment and progress is well documented and tracked so that all children are able to reach their full potential. A recent quality assurance audit confirms the high standards obtained and the good quality of resources and planning that underpin attainment. Children who need support have specific individual education plans in place and a designated special educational needs co-ordinator oversees assessments and reporting. Specialists are brought in if specific diagnostic tests are required. At the end of the EYFS scores reflect outstanding progress and are above the national and county average. Many children are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum and some within Level 1. Transition from Reception to Year 1 is well planned and the children continue to progress. All children enjoy their learning and achieve high standards; they feel safe, are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, make a positive contribution and thus develop their life skills for the future.

What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given in section 3.

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INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with 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 Jenny McCallum	Reporting Inspector
Mr Chris Compton	Director of Studies HMC school
Mrs Rachel Eaton-Jones	Headmistress, IAPS school
Mrs Kathy McLauchlan	Early Years Lead Inspector

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