

School inspection report

16 to 18 April 2024

Rupert House School

90 Bell Street
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire
RG9 2BN

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'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Pupils embrace the school's values of courage, creativity, respect and resilience which are underpinned by kindness. They extend friendship and support towards each other in their daily interactions and shared educational experiences. They are courageous and resilient towards educational challenge and new opportunities.
2. Leaders have high expectations regarding behaviour and anti-bullying and these expectations are shared by the whole school community. Pupils are happy and feel well supported and there are few occurrences of poor behaviour or bullying.
3. Leaders have the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles so that pupils' wellbeing is promoted. The new proprietors have a detailed and systematic approach to policy oversight and their effective implementation, including scrutiny of the record of appointments for new staff joining the school.
4. Children in early years receive an education built upon effective planning across the seven areas of learning so that good progress is made. Early years leaders meet regularly to promote pupils' wellbeing and there are effective systems in place which mean that children in Nursery and Reception learn in a safe and happy environment.
5. Leaders have developed a broad curriculum which is suitable to the ages and needs of the pupils and which is regularly reviewed. Leaders ensure that lessons are carefully planned and, whilst pupils do make progress, this progress is sometimes variable. The most effective teaching enables pupils to make good progress and facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding.
6. Leaders have instigated effective pastoral support systems so that pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing is prioritised and promoted.
7. Careful analysis of data demonstrates that pupils make mathematical progress. However, teaching in mathematics is inconsistent, sometimes lacking additional challenge so that pupils can achieve at a higher level.
8. Leaders have ensured that understanding of British values is prioritised so that pupils can confidently learn in a respectful and tolerant school. Whilst pupils understand that their school is a fair school, some protected characteristics such as age, disability and belief are not as confidently understood. Recent proprietorial self-evaluation has resulted in a commitment to develop a wider understanding of equality and diversity.
9. The school's health and safety procedures are thorough and timely checks and effective risk assessments ensure that pupils are safe.
10. Leaders have developed an effective safeguarding culture. Staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibility, are appropriately trained and knowledgeable and record-keeping is detailed. Advice and consultation with local safeguarding partners is prompt. Pupils feel safe and feel confident that they can approach a trusted adult for guidance and support, when required.

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:

- further extend opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge of protected characteristics so that they develop greater understanding of the diverse world to which they will contribute
- strengthen teaching, especially in mathematics, so that pupils are consistently challenged to extend their knowledge and skills.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders have built a school culture and ethos which actively promotes pupils' mental wellbeing. The school community takes a collegiate responsibility in ensuring that the core values of courage, creativity, respect and resilience inform the full educational experience so that pupils can learn in a supportive and considerate environment.
12. Leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to develop appropriate policies, systems and procedures so that all the required Standards are met. Wishford Education's proprietorial oversight is extensive and diligent. This oversight includes regular meetings with the school's senior leaders. This full and focused scrutiny on all aspects of the school means that pupils' welfare is actively promoted within a culture of rigorous oversight.
13. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act. For example, leaders have ensured that the school has developed a detailed and appropriate accessibility plan so that pupils with a disability can access a broad educational experience. These plans include provision for re-organising classrooms to enable access when the need arises.
14. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) make good progress from their starting points. Teachers write individual educational plans and regularly review them which means that teaching can effectively adapt to the ongoing individual needs of pupils.
15. Leaders have constructive working relationships with their local safeguarding partners. They seek advice whenever required and do so in a timely manner. The effectiveness of these links has a positive impact on the pupils' safety and wellbeing. Through these interactions leaders have developed a clear understanding of contextual safeguarding.
16. Identification and management of risk is given appropriate priority by leaders in all parts of the school so that risk assessments are thorough and relevant to the activity assessed. Leaders are careful to understand risk so that they can instigate control measures to take effective action to further mitigate and reduce risk. Leaders also ensure that suitable training is given to staff so that risk assessments are appropriately written, reviewed and acted upon.
17. Leaders ensure that relevant information is shared and made available as appropriate. Parents receive regular information regarding academic performance and the school encourages consultation regarding its relationships curriculum which is centralised on the school's website. Complaints are dealt with expediently and there is a clear and unambiguous complaints policy which is suitably followed.
18. Early years leaders are appropriately trained and they meet regularly to discuss children's progress so that they can effectively plan how to meet the ongoing and changing needs of children.
19. Leaders conduct regular meetings involving all staff to discuss the welfare and progress of pupils and to reinforce key safeguarding measures and procedures so that pupils can continue to learn in a safe, happy and supportive environment.

20. Self-evaluation is an important aspect of the school's development, and senior leaders and the proprietor have embarked on an ambitious and strategic programme for the school. In this period of ongoing transition, they have prioritised engagement and consultation with pupils, staff and parents.

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

21. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Pupils engage with their learning in a school where respect and an appreciation of British values is embedded and understood so that they learn in a spirit of corporate respectfulness and without fear of discrimination. Pupils' natural and easy social interactions with each other, and with their teachers, is notable.
23. Leaders implement a suitable and age-appropriate curriculum which offers a wide range of academic and educational experiences. Pupils are confident speakers who converse and debate in a balanced and engaging manner. Pupils are tolerant, active and sympathetic listeners and they understand and place genuine value on what others have to say. Pupils use well-developed hypothesis skills in science and, in English and history lessons, they were observed communicating logically and clearly when acquiring new knowledge. Speaking and listening, and the curriculum more broadly, prepares pupils well for the next phase of their educational journeys so that they typically achieve entry to their chosen senior schools.
24. Leaders have designed an effective assessment framework so that pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Pupils respond well to incisive and focused marking so that they understand how to improve further. Data is collected and used to inform curriculum planning and, in many cases, shows good progress by pupils from their starting points. However, whilst leaders collect and understand data, this does not always result in effective curriculum development to challenge the academic aspirations and potential of pupils with high prior attainment.
25. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points. Leaders have clear systems in place to successfully identify individual learning needs. Strategies for ongoing provision include a wide range of appropriate learning resources and a shared understanding of each pupil's needs so that their ongoing progress is properly supported. Careful monitoring of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is undertaken as required. Currently the needs of all pupils with EAL are successfully met by their class and subject teachers.
26. The strongest teaching and learning is imaginative, appropriate to ages and aptitudes and encourages pupils to develop relevant skills. However, there is inconsistency in mathematics where some teaching and learning is less insightful and impactful, meaning pupils are not always enabled to make the best progress. For example, in mathematics resource deployment and work appropriately matched to pupils' abilities were not fully effective.
27. Pupils are encouraged to assume independent responsibility for their learning, to which pupils respond positively and enthusiastically. Leaders have developed a digital strategy so that teachers can plan lessons effectively meaning that pupils are afforded timely and beneficial recourse to digital learning at apposite times in their learning. Pupils utilise devices effectively to support research and acquire a range of digital skills.
28. Teachers support early years children to work individually, in groups and at a whole-class level so that they develop effective numeracy and communication and language skills. This development of language communication is supported by engaging texts, story-telling and imaginative role-play. Teachers carefully demonstrate appropriate language to early years children by using sensitive and thoughtful questioning. Communicating about manipulating shapes to fit within an outline, for example, encourages Nursery children to engage in conversations and to extend their early

mathematical understanding, language structures and vocabulary. Leaders ensure there is an appropriate range of activities for those below school age. For example, a Hama beads club allowed children in Reception to develop their fine motor skills.

29. Leaders have developed an extensive range of recreational activities which positively contribute to the pupils' experiences. These include breakdancing, ukulele for beginners, art, lacrosse, choir and gardening. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given and they develop confidence and additional knowledge through active participation in stimulating and well-resourced activities.

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

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

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

31. Pupils behave well, supported by leaders and staff who act as positive role models. Pupils understand how to conduct themselves so that the school environment is calm and orderly. The shared connection between appropriate behaviour and an effective anti-bullying strategy is understood. Behaviour records are appropriate and pupils express confidence that any bullying incidents would be dealt with swiftly and effectively when reported.
32. An appreciation of emotional wellbeing is absorbed into all areas of the school and staff are mindful of their corporate responsibility in supporting pupils effectively. Pupils express confidence in a variety of effective strategies, including the Happy Hub as a place to relax and 'Winnie the Owl', so that they are able to discreetly request effective support when necessary. A number of staff are trained in mental health first aid in a further demonstration that the school is determined to promote and nurture pupils' emotional wellbeing.
33. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is carefully planned and appropriate and it supports pupils' appreciation of British values. Respect and tolerance underscore both the school's caring environment and pupils' confidence in establishing warm and meaningful relationships. Pupils have a well-developed moral compass because the school has embedded British values so effectively. Relationships education further supports pupils' sense of mental wellbeing and they feel secure in their daily interactions. The school has consulted with parents about the relationships and sex education (RSE) programme which is available on the school's website.
34. There is an effective prefect system which gives appropriate duties and responsibilities to pupils, including opportunities to serve as sports captains and house captains. Pupils articulate their views through representation on the food or student councils which has resulted in popular menu changes and pupils choosing which charities to support. Pupils are elected to positions of responsibility which helps them to effectively understand freedom of choice and democratic processes.
35. Leaders maintain an effective approach to health and safety and fire safety arrangements. Staff who lead on health and safety have appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles successfully. Detailed health and safety reports are written and scrutinised by proprietors. Leaders ensure that health and safety laws are correctly observed and there is a clear and well-rehearsed evacuation route from the school buildings in case of emergencies.
36. The premises and accommodation are maintained to an appropriate standard to facilitate the breadth and scope of the school's educational experience and to ensure that pupils are safe and secure.
37. The school ensures an appropriately detailed admission and attendance record is properly maintained. Class teachers monitor pupils' attendance and alert key leaders when they have a concern. The key leaders will then investigate the concern. Local authorities are appropriately informed when pupils join and leave the school at non-standard transition points.
38. The first aid procedures across the school are effective with detailed and suitable records kept regarding the administration of medicines, including in the early years. Parents are informed after

administration of medicines or if their child has suffered an injury. Staff training is thorough, including paediatric first aid training for those who work in the early years.

39. Supervision of pupils is appropriate across each area of school. Pupils are confident that support will be available quickly. In the early years, leaders maintain suitable supervisory levels for both on- and off-site activities.
40. The school inculcates spiritual appreciation through its outdoor learning environment and eco club so that pupils learn from environmental interactions. Physical pursuits are widely encouraged by leaders for all pupils to promote their physical and mental health. Activities include swimming, physical education, games and active extra-curricular clubs.

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

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

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

42. Leaders ensure that British values are taught effectively throughout the school. Pupils' deep-rooted application of respectfulness aligns well with the school's aims and mission statement to 'nurture happy, confident pupils who enjoy school life as valued members of the community'. Pupils hold a moral and empathetic commitment to engage positively with others both in and beyond school so that they are ready to contribute to British society.
43. Pupils understand democratic processes and they benefit from balanced political debate regarding global international conflicts, though knowledge of British politics and of public institutions and services is a little limited.
44. Pupils develop cultural understanding through initiatives such as International Day. They are interested and appreciative towards different cultures and are clear about the importance of fairness and individuality. Pupils understand some of the principles of protected characteristics. However, they do not yet have a robust and full knowledge of other protected characteristics such as age, disability and belief to empower further understanding of global diversity.
45. Pupils intrinsically understand right from wrong, and they are willing to assume responsibility for their actions. The student council work with school leaders so that breaktime rules promote safety, fairness and order.
46. Leaders ensure that economic wellbeing is developed so that pupils understand how to use money wisely and to provide altruism and service to others. Younger pupils successfully budget and visit local shops to purchase items for local food banks and to develop social communication skills. Older pupils develop entrepreneurial skills in turning £5 into greater charitable profit. Pupils embrace the school's locality and benefit from established connections. These include performing concerts at the town hall, productions at the local theatre and partnering with primary schools in shared educational ventures.
47. Pupils understand that they can provide meaningful service to others. Older pupils organise sporting events for younger pupils to give them support and to promote their own skills in leadership. Sign language was learnt by pupils to enhance a choral performance. Leaders ensure that pupils develop an empathetic social responsibility and pupils are proud to contribute positively to the lives of others.
48. Social development in the nursery is positively promoted through adult modelling, assistance with conflict resolution and relevant curriculum focus. Nursery children learn to collaborate with, and support, each other as seen during breaktime activities when children actively helped each other moving containers of sand.

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

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. Senior leaders and staff have established an effective safeguarding culture. There are appropriate policies and procedures, which are implemented effectively, to ensure that pupils' wellbeing and safety is promoted. Oversight of safeguarding arrangements by the proprietors is detailed and rigorous, including relating to the safer recruitment of people working at the school.
51. Recruitment of new persons working at the school includes appropriate safeguarding discussions and staff receive ongoing training so that they retain understanding and confidence in the school's processes and procedures. Staff knowledge is periodically checked, and measures are taken when staff identify that they would like any further training. Staff understand about how to identify and report any safeguarding concerns.
52. Designated safeguarding leaders receive appropriate and timely training, including working within locally agreed safeguarding procedures. This increases and consolidates their own knowledge and understanding so that they can effectively advise and further train colleagues. Safeguarding leaders have established constructive and transparent links with outside agencies and all record-keeping is clear and detailed.
53. Leaders have ensured the school has robust monitoring and online filtering. Any online search alerts are quickly identified, investigated and recorded by key staff so that pupils are protected from inappropriate content. Pupils' knowledge of how to remain safe online is extensive and well developed.
54. Leaders manage, identify and review risks well and will, when necessary, effectively implement additional measures to further protect pupils.
55. Leaders and staff understand that continued vigilance is essential to avoid any complacency regarding the promotion of pupils' welfare. The school has devised effective and trusted strategies so that pupils can quickly and discreetly seek support. Pupils feel safe and supported at school.
56. Leaders have cultivated a transparent and open community so that those who work at the school feel comfortable in sharing any low-level concerns relating to other members of staff. Staff induction processes are thorough including awareness of an appropriate staff code of conduct which is understood and followed.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Rupert House School
Department for Education number	931/6003
Address	Rupert House School 90 Bell Street Henley-on-Thames Oxfordshire RG9 2BN
Phone number	01491 574623
Email address	head@ruperthouse.oxon.sch.uk
Website	www.ruperthouse.org
Proprietor	Rupert House School (Henley) Limited
Executive Chairman	Mr Sam Antrobus
Headteacher	Mr Nick Armitage
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	210
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 January 2020

Information about the school

58. Rupert House is a co-educational day school. The school was founded in 1924, originally as St Joan's School. It changed its name and location in 1930. The school joined the Wishford Education group in March 2024. The school is structured into three phases: the early years; Years 1 to 2; Years 3 to 6. A new head was appointed in September 2020.
59. There are 49 children in the early years with 15 in the Nursery and 34 in the Reception classes.
60. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. English is an additional language for 3 pupils.
62. The school aims to: nurture happy, confident pupils who enjoy school life as valued members of the community; focus on each pupil's individual pathway, giving them opportunities to discover and develop their own talents; empower pupils to achieve, both academically and in the broader curriculum, and to prepare them for life beyond Rupert House. The school's values, all underpinned by kindness, are courage, creativity, respect and resilience.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

16 to 18 April 2024

63. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

64. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods, breaktimes and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor
- 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.

65. 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**.

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