



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ROYAL MASONIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Royal Masonic School for Girls

Full Name of School	<b>Royal Masonic School for Girls</b>
DfE Number	<b>919/6165</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY398298</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>276784</b>
Address	<b>Royal Masonic School for Girls Rickmansworth Park Chorleywood Road Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 4HF</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01923 773168</b>
Fax Number	<b>01923 896729</b>
Email Address	<b>enquiries@royalmasonic.herts.sch.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Diana Rose</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr John Gould</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>931</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls 2 to 18; Boys 2 to 4</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>23</b> 5-11: <b>194</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>73</b> 11-18: <b>641</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Karen Woodhead</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed 2-4 Girls 4-5</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>22 Jan 2014 to 23 Jan 2014</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection occurs over a period of two continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2011.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. 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 31 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 Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors 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.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the 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 to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Ann Stranack

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Mary Stephens

Team Inspector for Early Years  
(Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	2
<b>3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>3</b>
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	4
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	4
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	5

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Royal Masonic School for Girls is a day and boarding school for girls aged two to eighteen and boys aged two to four. The school aims to enable all pupils to develop to the full their academic, personal and creative potential, offering a nurturing, inclusive and supportive environment where each child is esteemed as an individual capable of success. More specifically, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aims to provide a stimulating, happy and caring environment where all children are encouraged to reach their full potential through a healthy balance of learning and play. The school is a multi-cultural community that reflects the local community. It is a charitable trust run by a board of governors, four of whom are also trustees.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1788 in south London, and moved to its present site on a 150-acre parkland estate in north west London in 1934. The junior school followed in 1973. Founded originally as a Masonic institution to provide boarding education for bereaved or otherwise disadvantaged daughters and grand-daughters of indigent freemasons, it became a fee-paying day and boarding school open to girls of all backgrounds in 1978. The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys continues to fund education of some girls in need. The school also educates boarders who are assisted by other national charities and local authorities. Ruspini House was opened in 2010 to provide Nursery education for boys and girls aged two to four years, from 8 am to 6 pm for 50 weeks of the year. Two Reception classes for girls are on the ground floor of the refurbished pre-prep and prep departments, which moved to Cadogan House in January 2011. The Reception classes and one classroom in Ruspini House open directly onto outdoor learning areas. All EYFS children make educational and recreational use of the extensive school grounds.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, outdoor learning has been expanded both in terms of curriculum opportunities and accommodation. There are now two Reception classrooms. A governor has been appointed with particular responsibilities for and knowledge of the EYFS. There are currently 931 pupils on roll, including 96 in the EYFS; 45 girls and 20 boys are in the Nursery, of whom 23 are under three years of age. Six of these younger children and ten others attend full-time, and the remainder part-time. Thirty one girls attend full-time in Reception. Six children have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and two have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Blue Class	Nursery (2 years)
Yellow Class	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Red Class	Nursery (3 to 4 years)
Reception	Reception

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with statutory requirements**

- 2.1 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

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

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Extend opportunities for exploration and freedom of movement through ready access to outdoor learning for all children in the EYFS.

### **3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 3.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Planning for the youngest children gives priority to the prime areas of learning, ensuring that children express themselves with enjoyment, confidence and increasing clarity. Other areas are actively encouraged so that, for example, the oldest children describe aspects of pushing and pulling. Sharply focused assessments by experienced staff ensure that the next steps are suitably challenging for every child. A careful balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities enables most children to reach or exceed their expected levels in the seven areas of learning. Daily opportunities for outdoor learning in all of these areas are limited in the classes without immediate access to outside facilities.
- 3.2 All staff understand clearly how children learn and use this knowledge effectively to ensure that they make good progress. They are fully aware of each child's individual abilities and have high expectations of what they can achieve in terms of academic and personal development. Difficulties are identified quickly and assistance, including parental involvement, given. Targeted and timely support helps children with SEND or EAL to make extremely good progress. Staff demonstrate enthusiastic and collaborative behaviour, encouraging children to enjoy tasks and support one another.
- 3.3 Parents appreciate the school's 'open door' policy. A planned induction process welcomes the family when children join the school. Highly successful oral strategies engage parents in their children's learning, although this is not regularly recorded. Questionnaire responses and discussion show that parents are overwhelmingly supportive; confident that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. They are delighted by the high standards of behaviour throughout the school. The setting is exceptionally successful in achieving the aim of providing a stimulating, happy and caring environment, and in ensuring that children are ready for the next stages in their learning.



### **3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being**

- 3.4 Provision for the children's well-being is outstanding. The well-established key person system provides strong role models for caring behaviour, giving confidence to children and parents. Consideration is given to each child's unique needs. Younger children have opportunities for sleep after lunch. The youngest children are helped to make independent choices in secure surroundings, Reception children are confident to participate in prep department assemblies. Excellent knowledge of individual interests and well-planned use of generous and appropriate resources encourage children to explore and play co-operatively, for example two-year-olds in the play house and older children categorising toys. Carefully supported sessions allow children to use their imagination, for example becoming a pretend marching band.
- 3.5 Physical development is a key part of planning. Nursery children challenge themselves on climbing equipment. The oldest children benefit from specialist physical education teaching and can explain the importance of exercise. Lunchtimes are very happy, social occasions, encouraging awareness of healthy eating and good manners. From the youngest age, children understand the importance of hand washing. The on-site medical centre provides an exceptional resource for the EYFS. Risks are regularly reviewed to allow independence within a safe environment as children walk between buildings.
- 3.6 Careful planning prepares children well for transitions. In the Nursery the younger and older children mix during the day and at before- and after-school clubs, and so the whole setting is familiar to them all. The older Nursery children visit the Reception classes regularly to become accustomed to Cadogan House. Effort is made to engage with the schools to which children transfer. Reception children appreciate the involvement of Year 6 monitors; during lunch and assemblies they become used to mixing with older pupils.

### **3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision**

- 3.7 Leadership and management are outstanding. The governors demonstrate an excellent understanding of EYFS needs. The strong team of practitioners ensures that the learning and development requirements are met. Tracking of individual children's achievements is good; systems are being developed to analyse the achievements of different cohorts. Safeguarding and welfare procedures are well established within the department and staff, who have been suitably checked, receive all necessary training in child protection, health and safety. The staff work extremely well together to ensure that children are very well cared for and treated equally in a safe but exciting and stimulating environment.
- 3.8 Communications amongst staff are excellent. All staff contribute to the detailed self-evaluation and agree on action plan priorities. The very effective systems for supervising and appraising all staff are clearly understood. Staff value the support given and the opportunity for wide-ranging professional development. The children benefit from the positive impact these initiatives have on teaching. The school has an excellent partnership with parents, who support all school activities. Productive relationships exist with the local authority and other outside agencies to support the children when required.

**3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 3.9 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. All children, including those with SEND or EAL and the most able, make very good progress in relation to their starting points, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are given opportunities to reflect on their achievements, increasingly to set their own targets, so developing self-evaluation and critical thinking skills. The youngest children are competent when mark making and have excellent recall of sounds. Older children are able to record their observations using sentences and read fluently. Those under the age of three are beginning to count up to five and Reception children subtract confidently using number bonds.
- 3.10 The children's personal and social development is excellent. The youngest worked co-operatively building sandcastles and put aprons on independently. Reception children help each other with zips and give reminders about tucking chairs in for safety reasons. They explained how people are all different and were respectful while listening to other views. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met in a manner that reflects the clear and shared responsibility for child protection. All staff understand the children extremely well, and so the children thrive in a very happy, secure environment. Parents and children greatly appreciate the level of care and teaching provided by the highly trained staff.
- 3.11 The EYFS has continued to provide the high standards reported at the previous inspection. This is a result of the leadership's very effective evaluation of practices, the development of the staff's skills and the whole team's awareness of the new EYFS requirements. Thus the setting demonstrates a strong commitment to improvement to secure the best possible opportunities for the children.