

# School inspection report

14 to 16 January 2025

## **Roedean School**

Roedean Way

Brighton

East Sussex

BN2 5RQ

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. Over the last two years the Council of governing trustees has maintained a clear and effective oversight of the school's provision whilst navigating a period of change. The trustees understand and fulfil their responsibilities well. They ensure that leaders have appropriate up-to-date knowledge and skills. As a result, the Standards are met consistently. Pupils' wellbeing is a priority and strongly guides planning and decision making.
2. Senior leaders are reflective. They evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes. Leaders report to the Council through a clear committee structure. Leaders and the trustees collaborate well. They share the same clear vision for the school based on its ethos and values.
3. Required policies are developed and put in place. They are reviewed and updated in a timely way. At the start of the inspection, the school had not published all inspection reports since 2015 on the school's website. This was rectified during the course of the inspection.
4. The school's curriculum is broad and carefully constructed to meet pupils' needs, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is consistent with the school's founding values.
5. Teachers and specialist staff provide additional support for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) so they can successfully access the curriculum.
6. Pupils receive a good quality of education and achieve well. They attain well in GCSE and A Level examinations because teachers have secure subject knowledge and teach well-planned lessons. Pupils make good progress because they enjoy learning and focus well during lessons.
7. Pupils' welfare is promoted well in the boarding houses. The quality of the accommodation is suitable and homely. Boarders are well cared for by both the house staff and the nursing team. Boarders of all ages socialise together as house communities.
8. Leaders provide an extensive range of co-curricular activities in which all pupils engage. Music, sports, drama, the farm, and many academic clubs and societies allow pupils to develop their interests and talents. Pupils thrive in the school's busy, encouraging and nurturing environment.
9. Leaders' behaviour and anti-bullying policies focus on pupils taking responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils understand this expectation and inappropriate behaviour is rare. When incidents do occur, pupils are guided to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others. Pupils typically display kindness towards each other and develop positive relationships that are based on mutual respect and trust.
10. Pupils are taught about life in modern Britain and are prepared well for life beyond school. Generally, pupils are given helpful information about next steps alongside guidance about higher education and careers. However, some pupils are not as well informed as they could be.
11. The relationships and sex education (RSE) contains age-appropriate content and is taught sensitively by specifically trained staff. Through this and the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, pupils build their knowledge and understanding about themselves and their relationships with others.

12. Leaders and teachers promote respect and inclusivity throughout the school. Pupils are broad-minded, embrace diversity and have a clear sense of social awareness and responsibility. They contribute to society both locally and internationally through long-established community programmes.
13. The attendance policy was amended during the course of the inspection to reflect what is required according to statutory guidance.
14. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders consult and work with local agencies when necessary. Staff are suitably trained and know how to respond to concerns. Thorough safer recruitment procedures are followed. Health and safety practices are robust and ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.

## 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:

- improve oversight of the information published on the school's website to ensure all required inspection reports are shared to give a clear and accurate picture of the school
- ensure that the school's attendance policy fully reflects practice and statutory guidance
- strengthen the provision and delivery of careers education so that pupils in all year groups receive well-planned, accurate and high-quality information about the diverse world of work and business that enables pupils to make informed decisions about their futures.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

15. The leadership, management, and governance across the school work together closely to ensure the required standards are met consistently. Council trustees ensure that leaders' knowledge and practice is current so that they can fulfil their responsibilities effectively and promote pupils' wellbeing.
16. Trustees make sure that they actively oversee the actions and impact of senior leadership through regular visits and meetings alongside scrutinising leaders' reports and evaluations. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Trustees have allocated areas of responsibility and a clear understanding of the school operations, strengths and areas for development.
17. Leaders demonstrate secure skills and knowledge. They make prudent decisions that prioritise pupils' wellbeing and target school improvement. Open and thorough communication between the trustees and the senior leadership team underpins this effectiveness.
18. Leaders and trustees share a thorough approach to risk assessment. They draw up, implement, and review risk assessments, safeguarding measures, and other key school policies. Risk management is comprehensive. Leaders address visible and harder-to-identify risks effectively. The school's aims and ethos are promoted in all areas of school life. Pupils thrive in a positive and inclusive environment that supports their academic, creative, and sporting achievements.
19. Health and safety are well managed. The Equality Act, 2010 is adhered to, with accessibility plans reviewed regularly. Leaders' decisions ensure the curriculum and school environment is accessible to pupils and supports their needs, including those pupils who have SEND. This contributes to pupils' academic and personal success. Leaders take pupils' wellbeing seriously. Leaders enhance site security and develop ways to provide pupils with pastoral support. Leaders establish effective links with external agencies to secure additional support for both day pupils and boarders if necessary.
20. Leaders for boarding guide and maintain effective house arrangements that support boarders as individuals and in the context of diverse, multi-national house communities. For example, boarders cook for the community during themed cuisine nights. Boarding rooms and facilities are well-appointed and comfortable. Leaders ensure boarders experience a wide variety of weekend activities and visits off-site.
21. There is a clear policy and process for handling complaints. Leaders respond promptly when concerns are raised. They record all details methodically.
22. The school's inspection reports since 2015 were not all available on the school's website as required. The attendance policy was also updated to reflect current statutory guidance. This was rectified while inspectors were onsite. All other required information and policies are made available, and parents receive regular reports on their child's progress.

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

#### **23. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. Leaders and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to plan and deliver a balanced and engaging curriculum tailored to the ages, aptitudes and needs of pupils, including those who have SEND. This is reflected in the quality of education, training, and recreation across the school community. Pupils consistently achieve well in GCSE and A level examinations. This reflects pupils' good progress from their respective starting points.
25. Pupils who have SEND benefit from individual support and personalised timetables, specialised resources and adaptive teaching strategies that best meet their needs. As a result, pupils who have SEND learn effectively and make consistently good progress.
26. When pupils who speak EAL join the school, they are assessed by specialist staff to check if they need any additional support. If this is the case, subject teachers use well-chosen resources and adapt their teaching to make sure that pupils to develop their language acquisition quickly. Pupils who speak EAL learn successfully and make rapid progress.
27. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They follow teaching plans closely to ensure that pupils acquire new knowledge, develop key skills and learn effectively. Teachers present subject-specific content in a well-structured and interesting way that keeps pupils engaged. In the sciences, pupils are challenged to think deeply and apply what they know to more demanding tasks. Creative projects in subjects such as geography, design and technology (DT), music, and art develop pupils' ability to think and work independently.
28. Leaders give considerable autonomy to teachers to deliver subject-specific lessons using the most appropriate teaching methods, but leaders also ensure that teaching aligns with the school's academic aims. Subject leaders check that their subject is being taught well across the school. They provide support and guidance to teachers in their departments to make sure that teaching is effective and pupils learn successfully.
29. Pupils concentrate well and work hard during lessons. They develop academic resilience, good study habits and are proud of their achievements. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully through the school's rigorous assessment system. Teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils so they understand what they have been taught and can improve their work. Teachers are quick to help pupils if they need extra support.
30. The extensive programme of co-curricular activities is ambitiously designed, thoughtfully planned, diverse and inclusive. Pupils participate wholeheartedly and lead many activities themselves. Sports, music, dance and drama, academic clubs and a multitude of life-skill opportunities are offered to both day and boarding pupils. Activities promote teamwork, resilience, and social interaction. Pupils build their self-esteem and broaden their horizons.
31. House staff and boarding prefects organise a wide variety of evening and weekend activities for boarders, such as film and quiz nights, or evenings focused on food and cooking. Boarders experience a range of off-site visits such as trips into Brighton at the weekend. These trips are accompanied and appropriately monitored by staff according to pupils' ages and maturity. Boarders are also given time to relax and spend time with their friends.

32. Lessons are well managed and run smoothly. Teachers develop positive relationships with pupils so that pupils feel confident to participate and ask for help. Teachers use a range of high-quality resources to enhance the pupils' learning experiences. For instance, where employed, digital tools are used to give targeted feedback to pupils and enable them to learn independently.
33. Pupils have opportunities to engage more deeply in a wide range of academic, cultural and physical experiences through the many residential and day trips, alongside long-standing community initiatives. These events increase pupils' engagement and motivate them to learn more.
34. Activities outside the classroom, such as the 'Wild Fridays' programme for pupils in Year 7 and involvement with the school's farm, allow pupils to develop their physical skills and understanding of the environment.
35. In addition to the academic and co-curriculums, pupils' personal and social development is further enhanced through the Roedean diploma that encourages pupils of all ages to develop broader skills and interests. In addition, the 'Head, Heart, Hand' programme for pupils in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 further enriches pupils' development. Pupils are well prepared for future academic and personal challenges, equipped with a strong foundation of emotional, intellectual, and creative skills.

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

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



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

37. The school fosters an environment of mutual trust and respect. Pupils are positive about their experiences of being welcomed to the school and quickly become part of the community. Leaders model, and pupils demonstrate, respect for those of different backgrounds and beliefs. This is supported by initiatives such as 'Culture Day', the termly pastoral focus, and visual prompts around the school that promote kindness and acceptance. Pupils develop a spiritual and moral understanding of life through the well-balanced and well-thought-through Chapel programme that draws from spiritual, secular and social messages.
38. Within the all-age, mixed day and boarding houses, the 'House Spirit' is promoted through pupils' day-to-day lives, and the multiple and inclusive inter-house and intra-house competitions. The design of the four main houses, with their outlook to the sea, further promotes pupils' self-esteem and their sense of belonging.
39. The recently revised PSHE and RSE curriculums are well designed to be relevant and meet pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from dialogue within lessons that allows sensitive topics to be given time for open questioning and addressed in a way that allows them to further understand themselves.
40. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are nurtured through opportunities such as assemblies, drama, dance and music performances, leadership roles, and the 'Big Sister' buddy system. The prefect group of respected pupil leaders assist senior leaders in the areas of the school that they represent, such as equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), arts and sports.
41. Pupils are provided with access to various means of support, including pastoral care, the learning support department, and the specialist support and counselling services. Well-trained prefects and peer listeners contribute to an embedded culture of support for pupils' wellbeing, where resilience, emotional awareness, and self-reflection are encouraged.
42. The physical development curriculum is broad and effectively delivered, promoting fitness and teamwork through games, competitive fixtures, and outdoor activities such as 'Wild Friday' and the school's farm. The school emphasises healthy living through awareness of lifestyle choices in PSHE lessons, and the provision of balanced meals with healthier options available. Sporting facilities and the broad co-curricular offer from staff enhances pupils' interest and eagerness for physical pursuits.
43. Standards of behaviour across the school are high. This reflects the school's positive culture and policies that are clear and consistently followed by leaders and staff. The merits system and commendations, which include the possibility of various badges and pins for the most acknowledged pupils, motivates pupils to make positive contributions and be the best they can be.
44. Leaders address any incidents of unkindness promptly. Anti-bullying strategies reinforce expectations and ensure pupils feel secure. Pupils' understanding of leaders' expectations around behaviour and bullying is kept attuned to the school's values and reinforced through regular assemblies and form bulletins.

45. Boarding accommodation is of a very good quality. It is warm and well-appointed. House staff provide high-quality care and support for boarders, including medical oversight. They prioritise boarders' wellbeing and physical safety.
46. Senior leaders and house staff, supported by trustees, demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where both day pupils and boarders thrive physically, mentally and emotionally.
47. Health and safety arrangements, including comprehensive risk assessments, quality medical provision and first aid training and procedures, are thorough and effective. Staff are well trained in safety protocols. Fire drills are conducted regularly and pupils are familiar with evacuation procedures in the main school and the boarding houses. Leaders ensure that the school premises are well maintained.
48. Attendance registers are kept appropriately. However, the school amended its attendance policy during the inspection to fully reflect current guidance. Admissions processes comply with regulations and leaders are quick to follow up any absence concerns. The school reports leavers and joiners to the local authority at non-standard transition points.

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

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

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

50. Leaders and staff promote mutual respect and inclusivity for pupils of all faiths and backgrounds. The school's specific ethos of developing curiosity and compassion are emphasised through tutor time, chapel assemblies and the RSE and PSHE curriculums.
51. Pupils are taught to value engagement with others. They demonstrate this in their positive interactions with each other, staff and visitors. Pupils participate in groups such as the medicine, dentistry and veterinary (MeDeVet+) society, and the lesbian, gay and bisexual, transgender (LGBT) Rainbow group. They get involved in fundraising for a variety of causes, such as an orphanage in Moldova. This demonstrates the school's efforts to develop pupils' respect and understanding, and to encourage their social engagement.
52. The school fosters pupils' social and economic wellbeing while promoting their contribution to society. Pupils are encouraged to take initiative and contribute to local and wider communities through a variety of projects. Pupils in Year 12 take part in the community action programme. Each week they engage with over ten local projects, including with primary schools and a children's cancer charity. Other established initiatives bring in pupils from local secondary schools for shared academic events. Such experiences build pupils' leadership skills, broaden their perspectives and deepen their social awareness.
53. Leaders value the importance of consulting pupils to guide initiatives and change within the school. They seek pupils' views through the school council and the prefect body. Pupils willingly take on roles that range from formal posts with significant organisational and leadership responsibilities, to the informal involvement of whole year groups in charity fund raising for their chosen cause.
54. Pupils understand and live out British values. They listen respectfully to a variety of balanced views and perspectives. Pupils are well informed about public services and the importance of rules and laws, supported by practical examples integrated into their lessons and school life. They gain insights into life in modern Britain through curriculum subjects such as: geography (Brighton today); politics (democracy and government reforms); PSHE (different family structures); and English (the lived experience of refugees).
55. The schools' ethos and aims reflect a strong commitment to cultivating pupils' social and cultural understanding. Pupils are taught about equality, diversity and inclusion through the curriculum, assemblies and daily school life. Pupils celebrate diversity through specific events, lessons and assemblies. They learn the importance of empathy and tolerance in the inclusive environment of the boarding houses.
56. Careers guidance aligns with national benchmarks. Younger pupils are introduced to the possibilities open to them in the world of work. Pupils in the sixth form are given guidance and support for university applications, apprenticeships and gap years. Pupils are generally equipped to make informed decisions through a programme of careers fairs, presentations and input from former pupils and parents. However, the programme does not sufficiently engage nor equip all year groups, most notably pupils in Year 11.

57. The development of pupils' moral awareness is robust. Pupils appreciate and can clearly express an understanding of right and wrong. Principles and guidelines co-created with pupils instil the importance of good behaviour and rules within the school and individual accountability.
58. Pupils are presented with balanced perspectives, ensuring an informed outlook on civic affairs. Economic education is well integrated into the curriculum. Lessons on budgeting, sustainability, and the general economy help pupils to develop financial awareness and responsibility.
59. The school's commitment to social, moral, and economic education prepares the pupils well for future success and inspires them to contribute positively to society. The school's core values challenge pupils to develop their strengths and passions alongside equipping pupils to be confident, interested and caring towards others.

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

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

## Safeguarding

61. The school's culture of vigilance for safeguarding derives from a clear understanding of shared responsibility. Trustees monitor the school's safeguarding arrangements closely through visits to the school, regular reports from senior leaders and checks of documentation.
62. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and team maintain close partnerships with several local authorities and other external agencies. They work closely with them to manage incidents and protect pupils from harm.
63. Trustees, leaders and staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding procedures in line with statutory guidance. This training is regularly updated and supplemented by further specialist training if required. Staff know leaders' expectations regarding their own conduct, they understand the whistleblowing policy and how to report a low-level concern.
64. The clear and comprehensive safeguarding policy is firmly in place and reflects current statutory guidance. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. This enables any concerns to be addressed effectively. The school responds promptly to incidents, ensuring pupils' welfare is actively promoted and their health and wellbeing protected.
65. The wide range of adults who make up the pastoral and boarding teams support pupils to feel able to share concerns. The electronic and paper 'green form' reporting system is also available to pupils if they prefer to report any worries anonymously.
66. Both day pupils and boarders have ready access to staff and there are appropriate levels of supervision. Boarders have access to an independent listener. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The school's filtering and monitoring systems check staff and pupils' online activity which further enhances online safety.
67. Leaders maintain comprehensive systems for identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns, including those relating to boarding and the local environment. Record-keeping is detailed and well organised, with appropriate action taken to mitigate risks. Risk assessments, CCTV, and the responsive support staff and house teams contribute to the effective safeguarding of pupils across the main site and within the boarding houses.
68. The school's recruitment process is suitably rigorous. Trustees, staff and volunteers undergo the required checks before commencing work at the school. Checks are accurately recorded in the single central record (SCR). A nominated trustee checks the SCR regularly, providing robust and supportive oversight.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Roedean School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	846/6006
<b>Registered charity number</b>	307063
<b>Address</b>	Roedean School Roedean Way Brighton East Sussex BN2 5RQ
<b>Phone number</b>	01273 667500
<b>Email address</b>	schooloffice@roedean.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.roedean.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Corporation of Roedean School
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Anthony Millard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Niamh Green
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	618
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	305
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 to 5 November 2021

## Information about the school

70. Roedean is an independent day and boarding school for female pupils aged between 11 and 18 years. The school was founded in 1885 and constituted by Royal Charter in 1938. It is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of trustees known as the Council. The school is located in Brighton, on the edge of the Sussex Downs. The current headteacher has been in post since April 2023. A new chair of governors was appointed in January 2024.
71. There are six boarding houses on the main school site, two of which are primarily for sixth form pupils.
72. The school has identified 108 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At the time of the inspection, no pupils in the school had an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
73. The school has identified English as an additional language for 202 pupils.
74. The school states its aim is to provide a distinctively academic, high-quality, all-round education, within a caring and friendly community and to inspire and challenge every student to develop her strengths and passions, seek the highest academic and personal standards for herself, and develop a strong foundation for her future where she will be happy, curious, engaged, creative, independent, confident, and compassionate.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

14 to 16 January 2025

75. A team of nine inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

76. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and safeguarding governor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

77. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)