



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ROYAL RUSSELL SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

**FINAL VISIT**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Royal Russell School

The junior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Royal Russell School</b>		
DCSF Number	<b>306/6009</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>271907</b>		
Address	<b>Royal Russell School Coombe Lane Croydon Surrey CR9 5BX</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 8657 3669</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 8657 9555</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmaster@royalrussell.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Dr J R Jennings</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Ken Young</b>		
Age Range	<b>11 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>585</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>0</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	11-18: <b>585</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>459</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	<b>0</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>126</b>	
	Full:	<b>126</b>	Weekly: <b>0</b>
Final (team) visit	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government 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 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.

Under the Care Standards Act 2000, an inspection of boarding was carried out at the same time by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). The report of this inspection is available separately at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in February 2010 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>2</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommended action	2
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>3</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	3
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	3
(c) The contribution of teaching	4
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	5
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	5
(c) The quality of boarding education	6
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The quality of governance	7
(b) The quality of leadership and management	7
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	7
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>9</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Royal Russell School, including its Junior School, aims to provide a continuity of education from the age of three to eighteen. It seeks to provide the highest standards of independent education, combining the best of both day and boarding traditions. It seeks to build an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, with academic rigour, pastoral care, health and fitness, and a breadth of artistic and cultural horizons. The school is a charitable trust, governed by a board of sixteen governors, assisted by two permanent committees and other *ad hoc* committees as required.
- 1.2 The school is selective, co-educational, and takes both day and boarding pupils. It is situated on a 110 acre site in Croydon, which it has occupied, with many subsequent developments, since 1921. It was founded in 1853 for the “children of deceased and necessitous warehousemen and clerks”. It then expanded to include the children of fee-paying parents in the textile trades, but is now open to pupils of all backgrounds.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection the co-educational balance has improved, so that numbers of boys and girls are now almost equal. Recent building developments have included improvements in the boarding houses and a new performing arts centre.
- 1.4 The school has 591 pupils on roll, of whom 162 are in the sixth form and 126 are boarders.
- 1.5 The school assesses the ability of pupils on entry in Year 7, using nationally standardised tests, which show that the ability profile of the school at this point is above the national average. Further nationally standardised tests are taken in Years 10 and 12 to assess the progress of existing pupils and to establish a baseline for those who have joined the school for the GCSE and A-level courses. Pupils come from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds, and for many this is their family’s first experience of independent education.
- 1.6 The school has no pupils with statements of special educational needs, but has identified 100 pupils as having some learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), for which 25 receive additional support. One hundred pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and 65 receive additional support in written and spoken English.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Royal Russell School enables all its pupils to gain high standards and make good progress in public examinations and their personal development. The curriculum is well balanced and the quality of extra-curricular provision is outstanding. The pupils' attitudes are highly positive and they show perseverance in work and extra-curricular activities. Their success is promoted by good teaching and by their own application to learning. The pupils' work is marked helpfully and, in the best lessons, pupils have good opportunities to assess their own work. Learning is less rapid on some occasions, however, because tasks are not matched to the differing needs of pupils or the style of teaching does not encourage them to think for themselves.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils benefit from excellent relationships and find the staff very helpful. New pupils settle in quickly and transition through the school and beyond is smooth. Behaviour is good. Safeguarding and health and safety measures are robust and well-known to staff. Pupils enjoy good provision for healthy exercise and meals are nutritious. Boarding provision is highly successful and provides an important focus to school life in a caring environment.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is good. Governors ensure that they meet their legal obligations for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection. Leadership and management are highly successful throughout the school and keenly promote the school's aims. The school has good links with its parents. Parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school helps their children make progress and that they are offered an appropriate range of subjects. Almost all agreed that the school achieves good standards of behaviour and promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. Parents have good opportunities to be involved in their children's progress and work.

### **2.(b) Action points**

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

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.

#### **(ii) Recommended action**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. continue to develop opportunities for pupils to learn independently and think for themselves; and
  2. extend the opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and thus take more responsibility for their own learning.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 Standards at GCSE and A level are high in comparison to those of pupils in maintained schools. Results at GCSE and A level have improved steadily since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, pupils achieve considerable success in their learning, in line with the aims of the school. Over the last four years, nearly all pupils have achieved five or more A\*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. In 2009, nearly half the pupils gained grade A\* or A. Sixth-form students also do well. The 2009 A-level grades were the highest ever, with nearly three-quarters achieving grade A or B.
- 3.2 Pupils make good progress in relation to their ability profile. They have secure literacy and numeracy skills and, by the time they reach the Sixth Form, have developed a capacity to think critically and creatively. With few exceptions, pupils gain places at their first choice of university. The quality of written work is good in all subjects. Essays are carefully constructed and imaginative writing is well developed. Pupils are articulate, whether in formal debate or speaking informally. They make good use of their mathematical skills across the curriculum and are competent in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils with EAL and LDD achieve well.
- 3.3 The school has many individual and team successes in its extra-curricular activities. The degree of representation at local, regional and national level highlights the pupils' impressive achievements in extra-curricular activities including sport and music, and reflects their eagerness to be successful in all that they do.
- 3.4 The pupils' successful achievements are supported by their excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils of all ages behave well, enjoy learning and work productively. They participate willingly in discussions and are keen to ask and answer questions. They enjoy strong relationships with their peers and with their teachers.

#### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.5 The curriculum makes a good contribution to the pupils' progress. Pupils of all ages are well served by a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their needs and aspirations. It covers all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education and provides the pupils with a good range of options at GCSE and A level. It is valued by parents and reflects the school's aim of providing an education of the highest quality. Pupils with EAL and LDD are supported well and make good progress in their lessons. The school is in the process of reviewing its provision for its gifted and talented pupils. Planning for individual subjects is good. The school has responded well to the recommendations in the previous report.
- 3.6 Throughout the school, personal, social and health education topics are covered effectively and provide good preparation for future responsibilities. The school offers good careers support, and guidance for university applications is carefully co-ordinated. The library is well-used, both for pleasure and for individual research.
- 3.7 The curriculum is further enriched by an outstanding range of well-attended enrichment and extension activities that build confidence and raise self-esteem.

Pupils throughout the school delight in the breadth of choice which offers something for everyone, from sport to music, and the recently-introduced jewellery-making and Wii clubs. The Combined Cadet Force, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the Model United Nations (MUN) contribute considerably to the pupils' personal development. Both parents and pupils highlight this provision as a real strength of the school. Enrichment through trips and visits is excellent.

- 3.8 Pupils have valuable links with the community. On an international level, these include support for an orphanage in Kenya and links with a school in Japan. The choir performs to elderly people locally, and pupils help out in a variety of ways in the Junior School.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.9 Teaching is good overall. The good quality found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained and, in many respects, improved. It is very effective in promoting the pupils' progress and fulfils the school's aim to provide an education of the highest quality. A significant proportion of lessons have outstanding features. In their questionnaire responses, both pupils and parents show high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and its impact on progress. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good and the wide-ranging resources are well-used to stimulate pupils effectively, and to stimulate their interest. On the whole, the tasks set are appropriate for each pupil's level of ability although in some lessons, as the school has rightly identified, the provision for the pupils' differing needs is insufficiently targeted. Excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils. Teachers plan lessons that use a variety of effective strategies, and the best lessons seen were very well planned, had a lively approach, made excellent use of the resources and engaged pupils fully in their learning. Where lessons were less than good, this was because the pace of learning was too slow, tasks were routine rather than challenging, and opportunities for pupils to think for themselves were limited.
- 3.10 Marking is generally up-to-date and, in the best examples seen, detailed comments help pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve. In interviews, pupils commented that they found the marking and the guidance they receive in class very helpful. In the best lessons, pupils are guided and encouraged to develop their skills in assessing their own work, thus taking responsibility for their own learning. This good practice is being extended throughout the school.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The pupils' personal development is excellent in all aspects, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good quality found in this area at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained and improved. The pupils' spiritual understanding develops positively, both within the curriculum and in many other areas of school life, notably through assemblies in the chapel and the extra-curricular programme. The pupils' self confidence grows through involvement in performance, through opportunities such as the MUN, and through the support and encouragement they receive from staff and each other.
- 4.2 Pupils have a highly developed understanding of right and wrong. Several initiatives within the school ensure that pupils are aware of their social obligations, and their responsibilities towards others less fortunate than themselves. They engage actively in charitable fundraising and aid projects. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors. They are encouraged to show initiative in all areas of school life. They take on posts of responsibility and respond well to the challenges that leadership brings. They voice their opinions maturely through the school council, and feel that their views are valued. Standards of behaviour are good, and pupils from all backgrounds and cultures get on well with each other. They are quick to see the implications of their own behaviour, and have a well-developed sense of fairness. They show a very good knowledge of public institutions and the level of debate about current issues shown by pupils in the MUN is outstanding.
- 4.3 The pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. Pupils appreciate the racial and cultural diversity of the school community, and work and play harmoniously together. Overseas trips and celebrations of festivals such as Chinese New Year are successful in promoting the pupils' cultural experience and understanding. Equally, pupils develop a strong awareness of British culture and speak enthusiastically about their trips, for example to galleries, museums and the theatre. Overseas pupils feel strongly that they benefit from the many opportunities provided by the school to improve their understanding of the British way of life.

### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.4 Staff provide excellent pastoral care and support. On this strong foundation, the personal development of individual pupils is ensured and monitored. The highly effective house system is at the heart of providing strong support for the pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils are proud of their houses and support them in a wide range of activities and competitions. Pupils are clear that they can easily approach a member of staff or an older pupil if they have a problem. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of younger pupils indicated that they feel the school is harsh in its use of sanctions, although as they mature they show higher levels of satisfaction with the discipline system. Relationships throughout the school are friendly and considerate, and underpinned by clear expectations of all members of the school community. Bullying is rare and pupils are sure that, should it occur, it will be dealt with swiftly and efficiently. The school ensures that new pupils settle in quickly, and that preparation for university or employment is thorough. The school's safeguarding measures are robust and well known to staff, all of whom undertake appropriate training.

- 4.5 The school has effective measures to guard against fire and to ensure health and safety. First aid procedures have improved since the previous inspection and the school makes good provision for pupils who are ill in well-equipped medical accommodation. Risk assessments are thorough and undertaken with a good awareness of safety requirements. Pupils enjoy excellent provision for healthy exercise. Attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and stored. Meals are nutritious and pupils gain a good understanding of keeping healthy. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with disabilities.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.6 Boarding provision is excellent, and has improved since the previous inspection. It contributes very effectively to the school's aim to draw upon the best traditions of boarding and day school education. It provides an important focus to school life, the effects of which are positively reflected across the school as a whole.
- 4.7 Accommodation is of a good and improving standard. The boarding houses are friendly places with good facilities and ample room for leisure. The decoration is in good order and the bathrooms, reported in the previous inspection as being inadequate, have been completely renovated in two of the three houses and improvement of the third is planned for next year. Experienced, well-trained and caring staff know the boarders very well, providing very effectively for their needs. Boarding routines are well managed and supervised. Parents and pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire were unanimously appreciative of the opportunities offered by boarding. A clear sense of community within the boarding houses ensures that boarders and day pupils are welcomed and feel part of the community.
- 4.8 Boarders have very good relationships with each other and with house staff. They say, in responses to questionnaires and during interviews, that they feel safe and well looked after while away from home. They are very conscious of the positive effect that boarding has had on their independence and self-reliance. Boarders enjoy each other's company, and appreciate the very full range of activities that are on offer to them in the evenings and at weekends. The majority of boarders are from overseas, and this added multi-cultural dimension is appreciated by both boarders and day pupils alike.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

5.1 Governance is good. The governors fulfil their aim to challenge each pupil to produce their best at all times within a co-educational and multicultural community. Governors have a wide range of backgrounds and bring a breadth of appropriate experience to the governing body in its deliberations, including proper consideration of finance, staffing and resources. A well-considered and effective structure of committees, which reports to the full governing body, ensures that governors have a clear oversight of the school. They take seriously, and meet, their legal obligations for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. They have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, enabling them to provide strong support for the school. Governors regularly undertake relevant training, and the school is considering ways to increase their involvement in specific subject areas.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

5.2 Leadership and management are excellent. The school understands itself well and knows what it needs to do to improve its already high provision. Excellent personal development and high and improving standards have been sustained under the excellent leadership of the headmaster. The senior leaders form a cohesive team; they know the priorities for the future and what needs to be done. A well-informed and well-understood management structure ensures improved communication and a clear understanding of roles at all levels within the school. A committed and supportive team of middle managers supports the school's vision very well. The school is successful in appointing and inducting well-qualified staff who are deployed effectively. A regular and thorough appraisal system is undertaken for all staff who are actively encouraged to participate in the very good opportunities available for in-service training. The pastoral care and the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are high priorities, with all staff trained in these areas. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and monitored. Support staff throughout the school make a strong contribution to the achievement of pupils and their personal development. The recruitment of staff is carried out appropriately and all checks are undertaken, including those with the Criminal Records Bureau. The central register of appointments is maintained carefully. The school's extensive premises, set in attractive grounds, are of good quality and maintained to a high standard.

### **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

The school has good links with parents, carers and guardians. This relationship is maintained through regular information about the school, including a newly designed website, an excellent annual magazine and informative termly newsletters from the headmaster. The active parents' association (the 1853 Society) supports the school in a variety of practical ways. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, nearly all the parents were strongly supportive of the school in general, and were particularly positive about the teaching, the boarding, the curriculum and the overall aims of the school. A very small number of parents feel they cannot communicate easily with the school but the inspection team found no evidence to support this view. All the required information for parents and parents of prospective pupils is available in the required format. The school has suitable arrangements for handling complaints. Detailed and clear reports are sent home twice yearly, but these do not

consistently provide information on what the pupils should do next to improve their work.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## 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 boarding houses and 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

Dr Lynn Bappa	Reporting inspector
Mr Julian Thould	Senior Team Inspector (Head, HMC)
Mr Mark Robinson	Senior Team Inspector (Deputy Head, SHMIS/ISA)
Dr Stephen Wilkinson	Senior Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC)
Mrs Lydia Baker	Senior Team Inspector (Head of School (Upper), GSA)
Mr Simon Corns	Senior Team Inspector (Head, HMC)