



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ROYAL RUSSELL SCHOOL**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Royal Russell School

Full Name of School	<b>Royal Russell School</b>
DfE 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 86573669</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 86579555</b>
Email Address	<b>headmaster@royalrussell.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mr Christopher Hutchinson</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Ken Young</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 19</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>894</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (496 boys; 398 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 75    5-11: 230 11-19: 589</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total: 761</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total: 133 Full: 133</b>
Inspection dates	<b>28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing primarily on compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS). The inspection occurs over a period of two and a half continuous days in the school.

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, as amended. From September 2011 the inspection of boarding welfare forms part of the inspection process. This inspection focuses on the school's compliance with 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in February 2010 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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 judgement.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and the governor with particular responsibilities for boarding and child protection. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, tutor group meetings and chapel services. Inspectors visited each of the boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. They ate meals with the boarders in the school dining room. The responses of parents and boarding pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Rodney Fox

Miss Elizabeth Knibb

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC 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) Recommendations for further improvement	2
(iii) Progress since the previous inspection	2
<b>3 COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS</b>	<b>3</b>
(a) Boarding provision and care	3
(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding	4
(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision	5

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Royal Russell School is a co-educational, boarding and day school for pupils aged between three and nineteen. The school aims to be an inclusive community, which provides a high quality academic education for girls and boys. It seeks to develop the best in its pupils, staff and families within a vibrant academic community, which cares and shows mutual respect for all, and which celebrates the success of each individual as part of the whole. The school is an educational charity, governed by its trustees. The present headmaster has been in post since September 2011.
- 1.2 Founded in 1853 in Purley, the school moved to its present location in Croydon, on the outskirts of London, in 1924. It occupies a mixture of traditional and modern buildings on a 100-acre site, set in woodland. The junior school, catering for day pupils below the age of eleven, is in separate buildings on the same site as the senior school. The senior school, for boys and girls from the age of eleven to nineteen, offers both day and boarding education. Boarders are accommodated in one of three houses, two of which cater for boys and one for girls. Each of the houses occupies its own premises and has its own house staff and distinctive ethos.
- 1.3 Of the 589 pupils in the senior school at the time of the inspection, 133 are boarders, 55 girls and 78 boys. The school does not offer weekly boarding. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school has identified 138 pupils as having a special educational need and/or disability (SEND), 80 of whom receive specialist support. English is an additional language (EAL) for 122 pupils, 80 of whom receive extra help with English language skills. Boarders mostly come from overseas, with a wide range of nationalities being represented, particularly from central and Eastern Europe, and Asia and the Far East.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. SUMMARY**

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

2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

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

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements

1. Ensure that routine safety checking of electrical wiring and of pupils' portable appliances is properly conducted and recorded.
2. Consult with boarders about ways in which to enhance the experience of the evening meal.
3. Create boarding house development plans as part of an annual review cycle.

### **(iii) Progress since the last inspection**

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in February 2010. The report following that inspection made four recommendations. The school has made good progress in addressing all four of those recommendations, including consulting regularly with boarders about their menus.

### **3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS**

#### **3.(a) Boarding provision and care**

- 3.1 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 New boarders receive appropriate induction and guidance through school and house processes, with suitable support from senior boarders and 'buddies' within their houses. Pre-term assessments of all new boarders by the EAL and learning support departments ensure that appropriate measures are in place from the start of term to support boarders' academic progress. Each boarding house has a member of the EAL department as part of its tutor team. Boarders have a wide range of people to whom they can turn for help, both within and outside school, including boarding and teaching staff, the nurses, the counsellor, the chaplain and an independent listener. Methods of contacting these people are suitably publicised in houses. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, boarders were confident that there is someone they can turn to for support when needed. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 The school has and implements appropriate policies for the care of boarders who are unwell. The medical centre is staffed by qualified nurses and the accommodation, including washing and toilet facilities, is suitable for the needs of sick or injured pupils. In addition to this, boarders have appropriate access to local medical, dental, optometric and other specialist services. All medication is securely stored and correctly administered through the medical centre. Boarders' rights and confidentiality are properly respected. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders have appropriate access to privately located telephones in houses, although these are rarely used as pupils have ready contact with their families through mobile telephones, email and video conferencing. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 The boarding accommodation is suitable for the numbers and ages of the boarders. It is appropriately furnished and maintained. Pupils can personalise their study bedrooms; they have suitable social areas for relaxation and are protected from access to their boarding accommodation by unauthorised persons. The school security systems do not impinge inappropriately upon their privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 Boarders eat in a central dining room. Apposite provision is made for pupils with particular needs. Despite regular opportunity to make suggestions about menus, facilitated through the boarders' food committee, a minority of boarders expressed discontent with the suppers, both at interview and in the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspection evidence showed that the food provided is suitable in nutrition, quantity, quality and choice, although the evening schedule allows little time to linger over the meal. Snacks are readily available in house kitchens at break and after school, with the opportunity to buy tuck after prep. Drinking water is available at all times. School and house kitchens are hygienically maintained. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 A central laundry provides appropriate laundering of boarders' clothing and bedding and house laundries offer the opportunity for individuals to launder personal items if they so wish. All boarders have lockable storage space and the school bank ensures that money is kept safe. Boarders are able to obtain personal items from nearby shops, but for younger pupils this is dependent on the willingness of an older boarder to accompany them. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 Boarders enjoy a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities outside teaching time and, in interviews, said the balance between having free time and activities

organised is suitably struck. They are aware of events in the world outside school through television and the internet, as well as via the international community in which they live. A sixth-form boarder gave a talk in his tutor group about current events in the Ukraine, for example. Boarders have suitable access to safe recreational areas and places where they can be alone if they wish. At weekends an appropriate variety of activities and excursions is provided. [NMS 10]

### **3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding**

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 Suitable policies are established to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, including when they are on school trips and expeditions. Welfare, health and safety issues are regularly reviewed by the health and safety committee, whose minutes are copied to the governors, enabling them to monitor implementation. Risk assessments are properly conducted and regularly reviewed. Safety check and maintenance records are mostly properly kept but those relating to the routine testing of electrical wiring and the boarders' portable appliances have not been reliably kept and some required testing has not occurred recently. The school is aware of this and appropriate contractors had already been invited to tender for the work at the time of the inspection. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 The school complies fully with fire regulations. A suitable policy has been approved, fire risk assessments are thorough and the local fire authority has conducted a review of the arrangements made to minimise risk from fire. Fire safety equipment is regularly tested and properly maintained. Evacuation practices are conducted at suitable intervals, including during 'boarding time'. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders are thorough and the policies and their effectiveness in practice are carefully and regularly monitored by the governors, although the care with which they fulfil this responsibility is not fully reflected in the minutes of their meetings. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Suitable measures are in place, and are followed, to promote good behaviour and to combat bullying. This was recognised by parents and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires and in pupil interviews. Boarders feel safe in their houses. School rules are clear and well understood. The disciplinary sanctions used, and the circumstances under which physical restraint or the searching of pupils or their possessions might be necessary, are all defined in suitable policy documents, which comply with relevant legislation. Staff and boarders are aware of and understand these policies. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Safe recruitment procedures are rigorously followed and meticulously recorded in a single central register. All persons over the age of 16, not being pupils of the school, who live on the same premises as boarders are required to submit to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check being made as to their suitability. Any person over the age of 16, not employed by the school but living in the same premises as boarders, is required to enter into a written agreement with the school which specifies the terms of their accommodation and the school's expectations of them in regard to protecting the safety of boarders. Visitors to boarding houses cannot gain admittance without being allowed in and conducted to the member of staff on duty. The school does not appoint guardians on behalf of the parents. [NMS 14]

### **3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision**

- 3.15 The school meets all the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is published for parents, staff and pupils, is widely available in school documents and evidently works and is referred to in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Management and leadership of the boarding houses are clear. House teams meet daily to communicate academic and pastoral information. The boarding housemasters and housemistress meet weekly as a group with senior leaders to discuss boarding practice. Development planning in each house is informal, with no written plans, although the governors have overarching plans for the development of boarding. Boarding staff are suitably experienced and trained in boarding practice. The required records are carefully maintained and monitored, and pupils' academic and personal development is tracked using electronic records. Parents' receive regular progress information via email, which is particularly helpful to overseas parents. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Staff working with boarders have clear job descriptions, are properly inducted in boarding practices and have their practice regularly appraised. Continuing professional development is encouraged and boarding staff undertake a variety of suitable training courses. All adults living in staff households are made aware of their roles. Outside teaching time, the supervision of boarders is appropriate to the nature and location of the activity. At all times, an identified, suitably qualified and experienced member of staff is responsible for the boarders and they know who that person is. Pupils' whereabouts are known and suitably monitored at all times and boarding staff are aware of the policy to be implemented in relation to children going missing. An appropriate level of staffing ensures that at least one adult sleeps in each boarding house at night and boarders have a satisfactory means of contacting them should the need arise. Residential staff are appropriately accommodated within, or close to, boarding houses, so that staff accommodation and facilities are suitably separated from those provided for boarding pupils. Boarders do not go into staff accommodation unless invited as part of a group for a social event. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 The school aims to be an inclusive community. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme for pupils in Years 7 and 8 covers bullying arising out of inappropriate discrimination and the school's inclusion policy promotes tolerance and sensitivity to different needs and backgrounds. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A minority of boarders, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, did not feel that their views are adequately listened to by the school's management. However, inspectors found that boarders have numerous ways in which to contribute their ideas or raise concerns about the way in which the school is organised. These include both school and house councils and a food committee. Boarders are encouraged to make suggestions about how boarding is organised and to raise any concerns that they have. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school has a clearly defined procedure for responding to parental complaints and concerns, which adheres to required standards. Scrutiny of school records reveals that concerns raised by parents are diligently and swiftly dealt with by senior staff. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 The role and duties of both school and house prefects are clearly specified and do not permit the awarding of sanctions. Prefects are answerable to senior staff and

are expected to work in support of younger pupils. The ethos in the houses is one of mutual support. [NMS 19]

3.23 The school does not arrange lodgings for pupils. [NMS 20]