

School inspection report

20 to 22 January 2026

Rookwood School

Weyhill Road

Andover

Hampshire

SP10 3AL

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. Leaders foster a kind and nurturing environment for pupils to learn and develop personal and social skills. They review provision across different aspects of the school and make improvements that have a positive impact on pupils' academic achievements and wellbeing and enable them to develop future skills.
2. Governors oversee the school effectively to ensure that leaders have the required knowledge and skills and that the Standards are met. However, not all the required information for parents and prospective parents was available on the school's website. This was rectified during the inspection.
3. The curriculum enables pupils to develop new knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. Leaders review the curriculum and the co-curricular programme and adapt it to meet the needs of pupils. The range of subjects is age-appropriate and enables pupils to make informed choices about languages and technical subjects that they wish to continue to study. Sixth-form pupils choose from a range of subjects that match their individual needs and interests. In the early years, leaders ensure that the curriculum enables children to make good progress in all the required areas of learning.
4. Teachers plan lessons well, with careful consideration of pupils' prior attainment, needs and interests. They develop positive relationships with pupils so that pupils are confident to participate in discussions and ask questions. Teachers across the school use a consistent approach to evaluate pupils' learning and this is understood by pupils and parents. They give pupils effective feedback to improve their work so that pupils make good progress and achieve well in public examinations.
5. Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), are supported with appropriate strategies and resources to meet their individual needs so that they make good progress from their starting points.
6. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are given additional support so that they make good progress.
7. The school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is planned together with assemblies, to enable pupils to respect all people. However, the PSHE curriculum in the senior school is not as effective as it could be in enabling all pupils to understand the consequences of using discriminatory language in their interactions.
8. Leaders and managers ensure that the school's premises and accommodation, including the boarding house, are continuously improved to meet pupils' needs. Health and safety checks are thorough and recorded systematically. Risk assessments are detailed and reviewed regularly. Boarding staff have the required knowledge and skills to ensure that the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS) are met.
9. Leaders ensure that the school's values and fundamental British values are integrated into the curriculum, assemblies and tutor time. A comprehensive careers programme encourages pupils across the school to think about their aspirations in age-appropriate ways. Pupils understand the importance of social contributions to the school and society. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education and life beyond the school.

10. The school has suitable safeguarding arrangements to promote the welfare of its pupils and boarders. Leaders with safeguarding responsibility ensure that staff are suitably trained and are aware of current and relevant information so that they remain vigilant. Safeguarding records are maintained securely and reviewed regularly.

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:

- ensure that all the required information for parents of current and prospective pupils is shared on the school's website
- strengthen the PSHE curriculum in the senior school so that all pupils fully understand the importance of demonstrating respect for all.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders promote an inclusive and nurturing environment for pupils to develop academically as well as socially. The school's 'ASPIRE' values are promoted in classrooms and assemblies to encourage pupils to be ambitious, stay safe and focus on personal growth, integrity, responsibility and emotional wellbeing. Pupils are typically kind and courteous. They apply effort in their work and are rewarded for academic and personal skills, such as resilience, through 'ASPIRE' rewards.
12. Governors oversee the school effectively by reviewing policies and procedures and scrutinising reports from leaders. They visit the school to gather the views of staff and pupils to ensure that the Standards are met. They offer challenge and support to leaders so that they have the required knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles responsibly. However, not all previous inspection reports were shared on the school's website as required by the Standards. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
13. Leaders are reflective and evaluate provision regularly so that they promote pupils' wellbeing. For instance, they have made changes which have had an impact on pupils' academic achievement, progress and co-curricular provision. Leaders have also improved pupils' understanding of how they can build on their skills for the future through an effective careers programme.
14. Leaders have a strategic approach to risk management, carrying out regular reviews of potential risks to pupils. They plan suitable mitigations to protect pupils from harm through a comprehensive risk assessment programme. Staff are well trained to identify risks in school, in boarding and during educational visits, and risk assessments are updated regularly. For instance, teachers and technicians have undertaken appropriate training to promote pupils' safety during high-risk activities in science and technology laboratories. In turn, pupils are taught how to mitigate risk in lessons so they can navigate practical tasks safely and develop independence.
15. Leaders establish effective links with the local authority, the police and experts, such as speech and language therapists, in order to promote pupils' wellbeing. Reports to parents are regular and keep them informed about their child's progress and achievements. Leaders share the required information with the local authority about pupils who have EHC plans. Leaders inform the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
16. Leaders in the early years have the required knowledge and skills to ensure that children are cared for in a nurturing environment. Effective discussions with staff enable leaders to understand each child's progress against the early learning goals (ELGs). Staff develop trusted relationships with families and communicate with them daily in person and online.
17. Boarding leaders ensure that boarding staff have the necessary knowledge and training to carry out their roles effectively. Policies are implemented effectively and are understood by boarders, parents and staff. All the necessary documentation for boarders is maintained in accordance with the NMS, and information is shared with parents.
18. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is overseen by governors. The policy is published on the school's website. Leaders listen to parents' views and take prompt action so that complaints rarely escalate. There is a suitable process for boarders to raise complaints.

19. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring an appropriate accessibility plan is in place. They review it regularly to make areas across the school site more accessible for those who have SEND. Staff are trained to adapt provision to ensure that they meet the needs of pupils who have SEND, including those with EHC plans. Leaders ensure equal opportunities for female and male pupils in sport. The school's uniform policy is gender neutral to promote equality.

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

20. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders ensure that pupils experience a curriculum that is broad, varied and meets their needs. Programmes of study are reviewed often and adapted carefully to provide support and challenge for pupils so that they build on their prior knowledge and skills. There is a wide range of subjects for pupils to study at GCSE, including religious studies (RS) and business studies. In the prep school, pupils are taught French from Reception and begin to learn German in Year 5. Pupils in Year 7 study Spanish in addition to French and German, which enables them to choose the languages they want to pursue as they move through the school. Similarly, pupils in the prep school develop skills in food technology and design and technology (DT). In Years 7 and 8 they gain added experience in textiles technology so they develop a wide range of practical and design skills and can make informed choices.
22. Pupils in the sixth form are well supported to pursue subjects that meet their individual needs and interests, including A-level choices in art, textiles, photography, geography and mathematics, as well as a BTEC in physical education (PE). They receive high levels of support matched closely to their needs and are suitably challenged to take responsibility for their learning so that they achieve well.
23. In the boarding house, boarders have time for quiet study in the evening and receive academic support from the house parent and their school tutors.
24. The curriculum develops pupils' skills in speaking and listening, with frequent opportunities for them to contribute to discussions. Pupils across the school develop linguistic skills in foreign languages, applying vocabulary and grammatical knowledge when they respond to teachers and communicate their ideas. In English, pupils analyse a range of texts and develop writing skills in a range of genres. In mathematics, pupils apply what they know to solve problems, self-correcting their work when needed. Pupils gain knowledge about a range of scientific concepts and develop scientific skills such as prediction, observation and drawing conclusions.
25. Pupils develop aesthetic and creative skills in a range of subjects. In the prep school, they develop an appreciation for different styles and features used by artists, which they use to develop their own artwork as they progress through the school. In drama, pupils explore different techniques to convey ideas to the audience, developing confidence in taking on different roles and characters. Pupils develop technological skills alongside aesthetic skills in subjects such as music, art, photography and DT, producing high-quality compositions, artwork, images and products.
26. Teachers know pupils well and plan lessons to meet their needs, building on prior learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use good-quality resources so that pupils acquire new knowledge and develop a range of skills. They encourage pupils to think deeply and apply reasoning through skilful questioning. As a result, pupils are motivated, participate enthusiastically in lessons and make good progress.
27. The school has assessment arrangements that are used consistently across the school and are understood by pupils and parents. Pupils develop a clear idea of their progress through individual written and verbal feedback. Pupils analyse and evaluate their own work, as well as that of their peers, which enables them to determine how they can improve. They achieve well in public examinations and are successful in gaining places to pursue their future pathways.

28. Leaders identify the needs of pupils who have SEND and provide effective support. The leader of provision for pupils who have SEND provides inclusive strategies to staff. Teachers and learning support assistants are aware of pupils' needs. They plan lessons that are structured thoughtfully and sensitively and use suitable resources such as coloured paper, headphones, electronic devices or a scribe, when needed. Leaders monitor the impact of strategies used to support learning and adapt provision so that pupils make good progress.
29. Pupils who speak EAL are supported with practical resources, such as phonics sessions, additional support with reading and vocabulary, and sentence starter prompts, so that they make good progress from their starting points.
30. The school provides challenge for pupils with higher prior attainment through the 'scholar's programme'. Leaders create opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom so that they make good progress. In PE, for example, pupils prepare drills for other classes to follow in related lunchtime clubs. Pupils develop a deeper understanding of mathematics in real life by attending events such as 'Maths in Action'.
31. In the early years, staff develop children's learning in all the required areas through stimulating activities that foster curiosity in classrooms and in outdoor spaces. Staff develop children's communication and language skills through purposeful interactions. Children develop phonics knowledge which they apply to help them recognise sounds and increase their vocabulary. Children develop fine and gross motor skills through a range of activities using carefully selected resources to match their interests.
32. Leaders plan co-curricular provision for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils take part in sporting activities and musical ensembles, demonstrating teamwork and enjoyment. Clubs such as food technology, remote-control cars and astronomy extend pupils' skills and knowledge in technology and science. Pupils in the prep school learn and practise techniques used by creators of characters in Disney films and develop social skills and turn-taking when playing board games. Boarders take part in activities such as local shopping trips, and film and quiz nights.

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

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

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

34. The PSHE curriculum is well planned so that pupils are taught about respect for all. Staff ensure that the topics taught are relevant and age-appropriate. Pupils in the prep school understand the word 'discrimination' and the importance of treating people equally regardless of age, disability, race or gender. Older pupils listen to talks from the police about county lines, knife crime and drug and alcohol misuse so they are aware of the potential dangers. In assemblies, staff enable pupils to contemplate the choices they make and the possible consequences of these so that pupils develop their moral understanding. Staff celebrate good choices with awards and certificates, which promotes pupils' self-awareness. In the prep school, wellness prefects celebrate acts of kindness recognised by pupils.
35. Relationships between pupils are typically positive and they demonstrate respect for others and their opinions. However, the PSHE curriculum in the senior school is not as effective as it could be in enabling pupils to extend their understanding of how inappropriate language can be disrespectful. A small group of pupils in the senior school use language that is not inclusive in their casual interactions with each other.
36. Pupils develop their spirituality by being given time for quiet contemplation in the school's reflection garden. They say a prayer before meals to give thanks for the food they eat.
37. Leaders ensure that pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing are promoted. Pupils who have SEND are encouraged to identify their strengths and pursue their interests and this helps them to develop their self-esteem. In the prep school, 'wellbeing prefects' are trained to listen to younger pupils. Older pupils have a member of staff appointed as their mentor, with whom they can talk about their progress and wellbeing. Pupils across the school know where they can go if they need a quiet space or wish to talk to staff who are trained to support pupils' emotional needs.
38. The school has a clear behaviour policy which is displayed across the school, understood by pupils and staff and implemented consistently. Staff across the school praise pupils and celebrate achievements, fostering their self-confidence. Where behaviour falls below expectations, appropriate sanctions are actioned and discussions take place with pupils to prevent recurrence.
39. The school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy. Leaders have recently gathered pupils' views on the subject and have taken appropriate steps to educate pupils, through PSHE lessons and assemblies, in areas identified as a result. Any incidents are dealt with by staff, with appropriate support for the alleged victim and perpetrator.
40. The school has an appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum. RSE content is developed through consultation with parents and in line with current statutory guidance. In the prep school, pupils think about their aspirations and the steps they need to take to achieve them. Pupils across the school understand the meaning and importance of consent. Older pupils understand the complexities of relationships and how to navigate these as well as how to spot signs of coercion and grooming, including online.
41. The school's premises and accommodation are suitable, with an ongoing programme of refurbishment to improve aspects of learning and recreation. There are robust procedures in place

to promote health and safety, alongside detailed and thorough record-keeping. Leaders and managers carry out frequent checks with careful consideration to mitigate risk.

42. The recently refurbished and secure boarding house provides a comfortable space for boarders to relax, socialise and study. Boarders personalise their rooms and have safes and locks on doors to keep their belongings safe.
43. Leaders and managers ensure that they comply with fire safety laws and provide the required training for staff. Fire procedures are rigorous and carefully recorded, including testing alarms and equipment. Fire drills in the school and the boarding house are carried out as required.
44. Pupils are diligently supervised during breaktimes, at the start and end of the day and when moving around the school. Staff ensure that children in the early years are always within sight or sound of a supervising adult. Boarders are accompanied on the walk to and from school.
45. Medical accommodation is suitable, and staff have completed the required first aid training, including paediatric first aid for staff in the early years. Boarders have suitable medical facilities, and medicines are administered in a timely manner and recorded systematically.
46. Leaders plan a comprehensive PE curriculum which enables pupils across the school to develop skills in a range of sports. Pupils understand the benefits of warm-ups to prevent injuries. In the early years, children develop their gross motor skills of balance, running and jumping, using balls, balance beams, climbing equipment and wheeled toys in the playground. In the prep school, through effective teaching, pupils develop ball skills that they can build upon as they progress through the school.
47. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of food and nutrition. Staff are aware of pupils' dietary requirements, and allergens are marked clearly. The school provides a choice of nutritious food at lunchtimes and for boarders in the evenings.
48. Pupils from Reception to sixth form develop leadership skills by representing their peers on two student councils. They collect suggestions and meet regularly with leaders to improve different aspects of the school, including equipment in the playground, events and clubs. Prefects in the senior school and sixth form make presentations during house assemblies, developing their self-confidence. Boarding staff hold regular meetings with boarders so that they have a chance to express their views, which are considered when buying food for the house or planning activities.
49. Admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately. The school works closely with parents to promote attendance and follows up any attendance issues in a timely fashion.

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

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

51. Leaders promote fundamental British values, such as tolerance, democracy and individual liberty, across the curriculum to prepare pupils for life in school and beyond. Staff receive regular training in how to support pupils in their understanding and appreciation of their own and other cultures. In the early years, children perform music and movement to a Mexican dance and learn about Mexican food and culture in the role-play area. Events such as Black History Month help to promote respect for all communities. Across the school, pupils learn about different world religions and understand commonalities between different beliefs.
52. Pupils learn about different types of government and listen to presentations from their local MP to deepen their understanding of democracy. In the senior school, pupils explore issues such as the right to a fair trial, which helps them to understand the rule of law. Pupils in the sixth form explore and express opinions about gender, exploitation and racial equity in their photography portfolios. In English, pupils study a range of texts that enable them to engage in discussions on contentious issues such as class privilege. They write ballads based on tragedies and calamities facing people in the UK and around the world, which enables them to develop empathy.
53. In PSHE lessons, pupils in the prep school are taught about the importance of saving money and the different ways they can do that. In the senior school and sixth form, enrichment lessons inform pupils about taxation, pensions, how to manage student loans and how to budget, to prepare them for life beyond school. In the early years, children develop an understanding of money being exchanged for goods in role-play areas.
54. Children in the early years learn how to take turns and share resources so that their social skills develop as they interact with each other. They are familiar with routines and move safely around the school. Children develop resilience and take responsibility for putting on and changing out of wet weather gear. They develop independence, making their own choices and moving freely between activities.
55. Pupils across the school understand the importance of social contribution. Prefects make presentations to other pupils so that they can vote for charities they would like to support, such as cancer charities and the local air ambulance. Pupils engage with the local community by performing music and drama in the nearby care home and in the local theatre. They work with a local photographer to shoot portraits of members of the local community. They invite their subjects into school to view the photos and give them a copy. This enables pupils to develop an understanding of local people and their interests. Pupils with higher prior attainment in art visit a nearby care home with a local photographer and engage in conversations with its residents to learn about their lives. They create thoughtful personalised portraits to present to the care home residents. Pupils in the prep school contribute to the creation of a reflection garden, which is used often for outdoor activities and quiet contemplation.
56. The school's careers adviser ensures an age-appropriate and comprehensive education for pupils across the school so that they can make informed choices about their futures. Posters displayed around the school and talks from external speakers give pupils information about different careers. Interactive, whole-school events such as 'Green Careers Week' and 'National Apprenticeship Week' widen pupils' knowledge about a variety of future pathways. Older pupils receive one-to-one advice

about post-16 options, such as university and apprenticeships. Sixth-form pupils are supported to gain experience helping in the early years, making complex props for productions and supporting musical performances.

57. Pupils understand the need to develop balanced opinions when discussing historical characters such as Al Capone and the prohibition law in 1920s America. In geography, older pupils discuss the benefits and disadvantages of the North American Free Trade Agreement. In English, pupils listen to and analyse speeches by world leaders and renowned individuals such as Martin Luther King, John F Kennedy and Malala Yousafzai. They use these ideas to plan their own effective and persuasive speeches on a range of current issues, such as the farm tax law and the use of nuclear fuel.

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

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

Safeguarding

59. The school has a suitable safeguarding policy and effective arrangements to safeguard pupils, including boarders. Governors oversee safeguarding arrangements effectively by regularly reviewing the safeguarding policy and its implementation.
60. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities have the required knowledge and skills as the result of regular training, including 'Prevent' duty training. They attend training and conferences organised by the local authority as well as the Inspired Learning Group (ILG). Leaders are aware of updates to current statutory guidance and review their procedures accordingly.
61. The leader with designated safeguarding responsibility delivers training for staff, including a thorough induction, so that staff are well informed of their safeguarding duties. Staff undertake additional training online so that they understand contextual and situational risks. They are vigilant and know when and how to report a concern.
62. Leaders ensure that safeguarding logs are detailed and contain a clear written rationale for any action taken. They liaise with appropriate external agencies, including the local authority and the police, to seek advice and make referrals, when necessary. They follow advice given and take appropriate action to ensure effective safeguarding of pupils at the school.
63. Staff are aware of how and when to report any concerns about adults in the school. Logs are kept securely and reviewed regularly in order to identify any patterns so that appropriate training can be provided, as necessary.
64. Pupils of all ages know who they can go to if they have a concern. Posters around the school inform them of relevant staff and there are also methods available to report anonymously should pupils wish to do so. Boarders are aware of the email and telephone number for an independent listener.
65. The school has effective internet filtering and monitoring systems to protect pupils from online harm. Leaders review these systems regularly to look for patterns and test them for effectiveness. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online in information, communication and technology (ICT) and PSHE lessons.
66. The school carries out all safeguarding checks for boarding house staff required by the NMS. The school's safeguarding policy has clear guidelines to promote the safeguarding of boarders. The leader with designated responsibility for safeguarding works closely with boarding staff to ensure they are vigilant and record any concerns, which are then followed up and monitored.
67. Governors and leaders are trained in safer recruitment. Recruitment checks are completed systematically and are recorded accurately on the school's single central record of appointments (SCR). The SCR is reviewed regularly by leaders and governors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

68. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Rookwood School
Department for Education number	850/6011
Address	Rookwood School Weyhill Road Andover Hampshire SP10 3AL
Phone number	01264 325900
Email address	receptiondesk@rookwoodschoo.org
Website	www.rookwoodschoo.org
Proprietor	Inspired Learning Group (UK) Ltd
Chair	Mr Amit Mehta
Headteacher	Mr Paul Robinson
Age range	2 to 19
Number of pupils	242
Number of boarding pupils	5
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 March 2023

Information about the school

69. Rookwood School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. The school was founded in January 1951. The school came under the proprietorship of the Inspired Learning Group (ILG) Ltd in March 2023. The school is supported by an advisory board, appointed by the proprietor, which includes members of the ILG team. In September 2024, the school appointed a new headteacher.
70. The school comprises four sections: an early years setting, for children aged 2 to 5; a prep school, for pupils aged 5 to 11; a senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16; and a sixth form.
71. Five pupils board in a co-educational boarding house a short walk from the school. Male pupils are accommodated on a separate floor. The school offers flexi and occasional boarding in addition.
72. There are 70 children in the early years, 4 of whom are in Reception and 66 in the Nursery. There is a separate registered early years setting for 22 children aged from 6 months to 24 months, which is not currently inspected by ISI.
73. The school has identified 64 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Sixteen pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
74. The school has identified English as an additional language for 9 pupils.
75. The school states its aims are to provide a high-quality, inclusive education that enables all pupils to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally. The school is committed to developing confident, reflective and responsible learners who are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future careers.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

20 to 22 January 2026

76. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

77. 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 governors
- 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 the boarding house accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

78. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net