

# School inspection report

4 to 6 March 2025

## **The Rowans School**

19 Drax Avenue

Wimbledon

London

SW20 0EG

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. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school. They are suitably experienced and support and challenge leaders, as well as the wider staff body. Governors fulfil their responsibilities as required and are effective in ensuring that standards are consistently met in the school.
2. Leaders successfully ensure that all members of the school community understand and follow the school aims. Staff consistently reference the school's values and golden rules in their interactions with pupils. Pupils understand these and typically make the right choices in their interactions with others.
3. The curriculum engages pupils and is age appropriate. Staff are successful in promoting a love for learning in pupils. Teachers have high expectations of effort and behaviour and are suitably knowledgeable about their subject. They typically deliver well-planned lessons that capture pupils' interest and enable them to make good progress. In a small number of lessons, teaching strategies do not always consider the full range of needs in the class. Where this is the case, pupils do not all achieve as well as they could.
4. Children in the early years thrive in the thoughtfully planned learning environment. Staff have established warm and positive relationships with children. This, alongside clear expectations and expertly planned activities means that children happily engage in their learning both indoors and out. Children achieve well across the areas of learning, with most comfortably achieving the expected levels of development by the end of their Reception year.
5. Leaders have created an effective and positive behaviour management process. This helps to develop pupils' independence in resolving disagreements with others. From the early years onwards, children follow the guidance they have been given and demonstrate high levels of maturity when resolving issues. Their well-developed skill in managing conflict means that playtimes are usually harmonious. Pupils play well together, showing high levels of respect and kindness towards one another.
6. Pupils learn valuable life skills and are well prepared for their future lives. Pupils proudly complete a life skills passport that records when they can competently complete day-to-day tasks, such as tying a tie or taking a book out from a library for the first time. Pupils understand that they can all make a difference to their community, such as by raising money for charities.
7. Leaders place the highest priority on promoting pupil safety. Safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and diligently followed. Policies reflect the most recent statutory guidance. Staff are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding leaders continually reinforce staff knowledge through regular training and discussions on relevant topics.

## 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 teachers consistently adapt teaching strategies to meet the full range of needs in the class, so that pupils make the best possible progress in all lessons.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Governors satisfy themselves that leaders are knowledgeable and that they successfully promote the school's aims. Governors are fully committed to their roles and maintain effective oversight of the different areas of school life, providing appropriate challenge and support for leaders through their regular visits and discussions. Thorough checks are made to assure governors that the school is implementing their procedures in line with policies, and that pupils' wellbeing is fully promoted.
9. Leaders successfully ensure that all requirements of the standards are consistently met and that staff promote the aims and ethos of the school. Staff consistently reinforce the school values and golden rules in their interactions with pupils as a result.
10. Leaders regularly evaluate the school provision, identifying and addressing areas that can be improved. For example, the art curriculum was revised to promote greater creativity and independent work. Pupils now have increased opportunities to express their own ideas and styles in their artwork as a result. Leaders fully involve staff in development planning. The staff team is cohesive and supportive of one another and this creates a positive school environment.
11. Leaders in the early years have a secure understanding of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements. They meet the learning and development requirements by providing a suitably broad curriculum. Leaders understand the safeguarding and welfare requirements, such as ensuring the required staff to child ratios are maintained, and they also provide regular opportunities for staff to discuss the children in their care and any training needs.
12. Policies are carefully drafted and followed in practice. Staff are aware of the published procedures and follow them carefully. They benefit from thorough induction training when they join, as well as on-going updates. All the required information is provided or made available to parents and other parties.
13. Leaders understand their responsibilities regarding risk assessment, ensuring that staff have had training in this area where required. Risk assessments for trips and school activities are carefully managed, minimise potential hazards and help to maintain a safe learning environment. A proactive approach to safeguarding is evident through meticulous daily and weekly risk assessments, including checks on visiting speakers to protect pupils' wellbeing. Risk assessments for specific situations, such as those relating to safeguarding matters, are similarly robust.
14. An appropriate accessibility plan is in place to support members of the community who have additional needs. The school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010. For example, staff promote gender equality by inviting female parents to talk about their careers that are linked to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.
15. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies, including the local authority, therapists and the local safeguarding partners, working with them wherever necessary to support pupils' wellbeing. Staff regularly offer advice and support to help parents.
16. The school has a suitable complaints procedure that includes an informal, formal and panel stage, with clear timescales. Specific early years information is included. Records show complaints are handled appropriately in a timely manner, with detailed notes maintained of any action taken and the outcomes.

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

**17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

18. The curriculum is consistently well planned. Subject leaders ensure that the curriculum is age appropriate, aspirational and promotes the school values of kindness, creativity, collaboration, honesty, resilience and aspiration. For example, pupils develop resilience through their perseverance in resolving scientific problems. Staff are reflective and adapt the curriculum where required. This includes recently introducing 'big questions' which help to develop pupils' critical thinking skills. Pupils find the topic work interesting, such as learning about rivers in geography and habitats in science, and apply themselves well as a result. Technology is used effectively across the curriculum, with due regard to teaching pupils about the safe use of the devices.
19. Staff are knowledgeable educators and typically plan lessons that successfully engage pupils across the ability range. Pupils make good progress, applying themselves well because lessons are delivered to a high standard, using appropriate resources and teaching methods. As a result, pupils exhibit advanced speaking, listening and reading skills, as well as an ability to reason, such as when converting time units and applying mathematical thinking to problem-solving.
20. In a small number of lessons teaching strategies are not consistently adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and this affects some pupils' engagement and progress. On occasion, some pupils find it challenging to adhere to the teacher's behavioural expectations, resulting in them becoming disengaged.
21. Early years staff know the children in their care well. Suitable use is made of assessment to track progress and plan interventions. Children make good progress from their starting points in both Kindergarten and Reception. Children in early years who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make rapid progress, which is helped by the targeted support provided by learning support staff. Staff work with parents to help them support their child at home, such as when children have specific needs or speak EAL.
22. The early years learning environment is engaging and staff plan activities that enthuse children. Kindergarten children demonstrate a love of learning and are confident to engage in group activities, such as playing board games, and initiating play in the outdoor 'barbers' shop'. Staff engage fully with children, extending their knowledge by holding conversations using high level language. Early literacy skills are taught effectively, including through use of a well-planned programme to introduce letter sounds. Reception children develop secure early literacy skills, such as when listening and recalling stories, when writing words and sentences and when using their knowledge of the sounds letters represent to spell. Staff help children acquire a solid understand of mathematical concepts by making activities relevant and fostering enjoyment in number activities, for example through regular mathematics meetings where children answer fun quiz questions to reinforce their mathematical understanding.
23. Teachers' careful monitoring of assessment data across the school helps shape planning for future learning. Parents are made aware of their child's progress through formal written and verbal reports and through informal meetings. Teachers make pupils aware that they can all make mistakes, which are celebrated as 'marvellous mistakes', and pupils are given guidance as to how to improve. Effective marking systems are understood by the pupils who are clear that they need to review the marking before going on to a new piece of work. They are proud of their achievements.

24. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are appropriately supported and make good progress. Staff identify pupils who have SEND and put appropriate plans in place to support these pupils. Their needs are met in lessons with personalised learning strategies and effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. Staff also monitor pupils who may require additional support. In most lessons, activities are well matched to the range of abilities.
25. Pupils who speak EAL are well supported. They make good progress in their fluency in English and are encouraged to celebrate their first language through becoming language ambassadors. Pupils who speak EAL are provided with opportunities to share their language in a variety of situations such as at the Christmas concert where they sing in their first language. This raises their self-esteem.
26. Leaders provide opportunities to enrich the curriculum by planning theme days such as World Book Day, which include activities led by visiting speakers. These events promote a love for reading, writing and drawing.
27. Leaders provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities for children from Reception upwards. Clubs are well attended. Their decision to use physical education (PE) specialists provides pupils with opportunities to develop their sporting skills effectively. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment and engagement. The school's inclusive approach enables all pupils, regardless of ability, to participate in activities. Pupils develop their social and physical skills in a wide range of areas, such as gardening, chess, dodgeball and philosophy.

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

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

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

29. The school promotes pupils' physical and mental health through a well-planned curriculum that supports both physical activity and emotional wellbeing. Pupils develop their self-confidence and teamwork skills through a broad range of sports and recreational activities, including ball skills, gymnastics and archery. Older pupils benefit from playing fixtures against local schools, helping develop their understanding of competition and teamwork.
30. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive, fostering a nurturing and respectful environment. Staff praise and encourage pupils, helping develop their resilience and a willingness to engage in their learning. Self-reflection is encouraged through self-marking and peer marking, allowing pupils to identify areas for improvement.
31. The school's behavioural guidelines are age appropriate and followed by both pupils and staff. The golden rules and tools such as 'Beau's wheel of choice' teach pupils strategies to handle conflicts independently before seeking adult intervention. Pupils are enabled to develop self-awareness and resilience. They have a high degree of self-regulation of their own behaviour for their age, especially during playtimes. Pupils feel that bullying is not a significant issue, with staff responding pro-actively to any concerns.
32. Pupils with emotional needs are well supported. Pupils learn strategies to help them self-regulate, supported by posters in the classrooms. Pupils acquire further skills to help support their mental health during 'wellbeing Wednesdays', which support both pupils and staff.
33. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is planned and delivered effectively to promote the school's aims, such as through assemblies and the production of artwork linked to the school's values. Pupils achieve star awards for putting the school's aims and values into practice, boosting their confidence and pride. The structured relationship education curriculum enables pupils to develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships in both school and wider social contexts. This actively promotes the mental wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of pupils. Pupils learn to respect all members of their community. When planning across the curriculum, staff identify opportunities where they can extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils develop an understanding of the spiritual thoughts and beliefs of different cultures while learning about Indigenous Australians.
34. Leaders enable older pupils to take on positions of responsibility. Pupils proudly undertake various leadership opportunities, such as by electing to be school councillors, house captains, or junior travel ambassadors. These roles contribute to the school community and allow pupils to develop responsibility and self-esteem.
35. Staff in the early years promote children's social, emotional and personal skills, and this helps them develop into confident, well-rounded individuals. Children are happy and comfortable to engage with one another in activities and benefit from clear expectations and well-established routines. Early years staff reinforce the school values in activities, enabling children to gain a deep understanding of what they mean and their importance. For example, when discussing whether characters in a book show kindness and collaboration.

36. Early years children have daily opportunities to engage in exercise. They eagerly participate in specialist PE lessons where they develop their physical skills, such as when Reception children competently use hockey sticks and balls. Staff seize opportunities for children to engage in action rhymes, which they do well. They ably use a range of wheeled vehicles in outdoor play, which helps develop their co-ordination and physical skills.
37. Leaders maintain high staff-to-pupil ratios to provide appropriate supervision of pupils during breaktimes as well as lesson times. Staff follow procedures diligently, meaning that pupils are always supervised. Procedures for school trips are rigorous and include measures such as frequent head counts.
38. Governors and leaders ensure that the premises and accommodation are well maintained, and appropriate for the age range of pupils, through regular checks and upkeep. Both indoor and outdoor space is effectively utilised. Health and safety measures are comprehensive and well implemented, ensuring a secure environment for all pupils. Regular fire drills, well-maintained outdoor play areas and robust first aid provision contribute to pupils' physical wellbeing. Medical procedures are thorough, with clear protocols for administering and recording medication, as well as prompt parental communication in cases of injury.
39. Leaders implement the recent guidance to support and improve school attendance. Absences and changes to the admission register are recorded accurately. The school informs the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition. Attendance is closely monitored, with the school following up on any patterns with parents, such as when children have regular absences for health reasons.

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

**40. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

41. Leaders' decision to teach life skills throughout the school helps pupils acquire valuable skills for their future lives. Pupils are fully invested in completing their 'Life-Skills Passport' that links pupils' achievements outside of school and those in school, such as being able to order a drink at a restaurant or cafe. Pupils learn how to administer simple emergency first aid to others, for example how to put someone in the recovery position and when to call for an ambulance. They support local charities such as a city farm, which has helped pupils understand how they can play a part in giving back to society, thus improving the lives of others.
42. Pupils widen their understanding of the world through taking part in activities such as international week, where each class takes on the job of researching the culture of a chosen country and then shares their knowledge with the wider school community. Pupils learn about other cultures and beliefs within assemblies and form time and take delight in listening to others' experiences, as well as sharing their own.
43. Pupils are aware of the environmental impact humans have on the planet and engage in initiatives to help raise awareness and reduce their impact on the world. For example, junior travel ambassadors help organise a 'bling your bike' and 'sparkle your scooter' day, to encourage parents to reduce car travel.
44. Learning about democracy is embedded in school life through activities such as school council elections, where pupils write manifestos and campaign for votes. School councillors participate in weekly meetings where they put forward ideas and these are decided upon. Pupils engage in voting regularly, such as for choosing charities to support and voting for house captains.
45. Staff are positive role models and provide opportunities for pupils to express their opinions. Pupils are considerate, reflecting a positive school culture that encourages respect for all members of the community and open communication. Pupils experience social cohesion through positive interactions and shared activities with the wider school community, such as during whole-school events. Older pupils are responsible role models for younger pupils, such as by escorting younger classes on their first visit to the post office, teaching them about how much it costs to send a letter and road safety.
46. Pupils are accepting of differences, including those related to race, gender, family make-up, religion and disability. Leaders provide a range of resources for pupils to use that represent a diverse society, such as library books and toys. Assemblies and class discussions provide opportunities for pupils to share successes and experiences, fostering a positive school culture. Pupils gain greater knowledge about different religions and festivals from visitors or visits to local places of worship.
47. Pupils gain a secure understanding of right and wrong through the constant reinforcement of the golden rules. They are taught about how rules apply in the wider world through activities such as visits from the police. Pupils learn about the important roles adults play in society through local visits and talks by visitors from a range of professions, such as firefighters, dentists and members of parliament.

48. Pupils begin to gain an understanding of money through curricular subjects such as mathematics. Fund raising for charities helps pupils understand the value of money through learning about the costliness of maintaining facilities. Their charitable work also helps them understand the importance of giving back to society, such as by donating toys.
49. Staff prepare pupils well for their move to their next class or next stage of their education. Pupils benefit from moving-up mornings to help manage expectations, whilst close links with future schools help ease the transition at the end of Year 2. Leaders provide advice and guidance to older pupils so that they are prepared for any entry assessments.
50. Early years children are encouraged to develop confidence and become socially aware. Children engage in activities with others and follow the class rules diligently, for instance at the end of sessions they work effectively together to tidy up. Children greet visitors warmly and are eager to engage in discussion. They learn about the wider world, such as through trips to the local area, topic work and by taking part in the whole school theme weeks.

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

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

## Safeguarding

52. The governors and leaders ensure that there are robust safeguarding arrangements in place to protect pupils. There is a positive safeguarding culture across the school. The safeguarding policy is up to date and includes clear details on the procedures to follow in the event of a concern being raised.
53. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have a secure knowledge of the safeguarding requirements. They keep abreast of any updates to statutory guidance and are reflective when completing self-evaluation audits. Staff know how to recognise and report concerns because they receive regular training, including frequent safeguarding discussions in meetings. Staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding the prevention of extremism. They understand the staff code of conduct and follow the procedures for reporting low-level concerns.
54. Safeguarding leaders maintain comprehensive records, with full timelines of any actions and decisions. They understand the threshold for reporting to external agencies. Concerns are handled in line with the published procedures, with evidence of effective working with external agencies where required. Safeguarding leaders are conscientious in their approach to managing any safeguarding risks. The safeguarding leaders are well supported by the safeguarding governor, who meets with them regularly to review procedures, and reports to the full board.
55. Leaders have created a secure and welcoming environment where pupils feel happy and safe. The curriculum plays a key role in safeguarding education. Well-planned PHSE lessons and assemblies enable pupils to learn about important topics such as fire drills, online safety and the rules to protect their personal boundaries. Pupils talk to trusted adults if they have a concern and are confident to express concerns and ask for help when needed. Leaders help parents understand the steps they can take to help keep their children safe, for example by offering advice on monitoring their child's use of electronic devices.
56. The school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place. Safeguarding leaders receive reports on internet searches and check usage weekly. Staff are vigilant when pupils are using devices. checking that they are accessing appropriate information.
57. Record-keeping in terms of staff checks is highly effective and contributes towards a culture that keeps the children safe. Appropriate and thorough employment checks are completed with safer recruitment practices maintained throughout. The single central record (SCR) is correctly maintained and accurately records the details of the recruitment checks undertaken.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	The Rowans School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	315/6002
<b>Registered charity number</b>	277324
<b>Address</b>	The Rowans School 19 Drax Avenue Wimbledon London SW20 0EG
<b>Phone number</b>	020 8946 8220
<b>Email address</b>	office@rowans.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.rowans.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Shrewsbury House School Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Darren Johns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Elizabeth Spratt (Maternity Leave) Miss Rose Fookes (Acting Head)
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 7
<b>Number of pupils</b>	113
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 to 11 February 2022

## Information about the school

59. The Rowans School is a co-educational day school located in Wimbledon. The school comprises the early years and Key Stage 1, which consists of two Year 1 and two Year 2 classes. The school is part of the Shrewsbury House School Trust, which is administered by a board of governors whose members are also directors of the company. The headteacher was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection and there is an acting headteacher in place.
60. There are 56 children in the early years foundation stage, which comprises a Kindergarten and two Reception classes.
61. A very small proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. The school has identified English as an additional language for 17 pupils.
63. The school states its aims are to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in which all children can develop a love of learning and reach a high academic standard according to their ability. It endeavours to enable each child to progress in all areas of their learning by providing challenging and inspiring teaching. The intention is to nurture the wellbeing of each child and promote a love of learning, as well as a desire to achieve to the best of their potential. Children are encouraged to become independent, confident, enthusiastic learners. The school seeks to help pupils give the best of themselves by acquiring life skills and a social awareness of others.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

4 to 6 March 2025

64. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

65. 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
- discussion with a group of 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

66. 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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