

School inspection report

30 April to 2 May 2024

Egerton-Rothesay School

Durrants Lane

Berkhamstead

Hertfordshire

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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 ensure that the Standards are met through vigilant oversight of all areas of the school. Leaders implement policies and procedures effectively, although some recording of information needs to be more systematic.
2. The promotion of pupils' academic, physical, emotional and social wellbeing is reflected in the detailed planning of each pupil's curriculum. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans which are reviewed annually with parents/carers and local authorities.
3. The curriculum provides pupils with experiences in all the areas mandated by regulations, as well as specialised support for pupils' individual needs. As a result, high attaining pupils study for GCSE examinations. Rowan is the centre within the school where pupils with more significant academic or anxiety needs are given tailored one-to-one support. Currently, the school does not offer a sixth form curriculum that would enable these very vulnerable pupils to remain at school after the age of 16.
4. Teachers and support assistants have good subject knowledge and a detailed awareness of pupils' aptitudes. This is reflected in their detailed individual planning of support for each pupil. There is an emphasis on activity designed to maintain pupils' engagement and develop their confidence.
5. The quality of interactions between staff and pupils underpins the high levels of respect shown by pupils to each other. These are reinforced through assemblies and in lessons. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, which includes relationship and sex education (RSE), has been written to allow for the different verbal, social and emotional development of pupils. It is effective in providing clear guidance as well as opportunities for discussion.
6. Pupils behave well. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies and their implementation are sensitively adjusted to the individual and additional needs of each pupil.
7. The school meets all the requirements of health and safety and fire legislation, although recording is not systematic in all areas. Attention has been given to the safe and rapid evacuation of pupils with physical disabilities.
8. The school's accommodation includes therapy rooms and meets the needs of all pupils.
9. All pupils have a mental health plan whose contents reflect their level of need and risk. They are regularly reviewed as part of the assessment of risk to wellbeing which is shared daily in staff meetings.
10. Governors have provided safeguarding leaders with the time to ensure that implementation of the school's policies is effective and regularly reviewed. There is clear communication between subject teachers, specialist staff and leaders. Adults in the school have an acute awareness of the needs of pupils and behaviours that might raise extra concerns. Safeguarding records are detailed. Safeguarding arrangements are overseen by a governor appointee with appropriate expertise.

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

- review the way in which information, for example records of health and safety checks or serious sanctions, is stored so that trends can be identified more readily
- introduce further sixth-form options suitable for pupils whose needs cannot yet be met by mainstream education.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Governors and their appointed advisors maintain an accurate oversight of school activity, including the effective implementation of statutory policies. The governing body has a broad range of skills in recruitment, safeguarding, health and safety and the management of SEND provision. This enables them to have an informed view of all aspects of the school. They conduct this oversight through frequent visits to the school, discussion with staff and pupils, independent surveys and a review of documentation. In some areas, for example health and safety, documentation needs centralising so that governors can more effectively conduct an oversight of compliance.
12. Through this process governors have assured themselves that leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure the school consistently meets the Standards. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
13. Leaders have a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the individual and wide-ranging additional needs of all pupils. They gain this through an admissions process in which prospective pupils attend school for three days and are observed by specialist staff. Pupils' EHC plans are discussed in detail with parents, local authorities, and other invited representatives. As a result, there is an accurate and up-to-date identification of pupils' needs and agreement on the extent and type of support.
14. Because of their individual and additional needs, all pupils in the school are vulnerable. Consequently, the risk to their wellbeing is identified and documented. Risk is mitigated through specialised and one-to-one support for some pupils continuously throughout the school day. All pupils have mental health plans.
15. The school's curriculum is described by leaders as a hybrid between that of a mainstream and special needs school. It provides a blend of academic courses and support for pupils' emotional and social development. Leaders adjust it annually to suit the specific needs of different pupils. This flexibility allows leaders to provide courses that gradually develop the academic attainment of pupils. In this way leaders make decisions that reflect the aim of the school that pupils achieve their highest potential.
16. Pupils have a range of specific learning difficulties; speech, language and communication needs, social and emotional needs, autistic spectrum conditions and physical and medical needs. Governors have provided a specialised area, 'Rowan', within the school, which offers enhanced support for those with the most complex needs. Hence the school is promoting the wellbeing of the most vulnerable pupils.
17. Leaders provide parents and carers with frequent informal updates on pupils' wellbeing and academic progress. There are annual formal reports in each subject, and parents/carers contribute to the annual review of pupils' EHC plans. All other information is easily accessible on the school's website.
18. The frequent communication between parents/carers and school staff means that concerns are quickly identified and addressed. The complaints procedure is made available to parents and rigorously followed if a formal complaint is made.

19. Designated staff liaise with more than ten local authorities regarding 150 pupil care plans. They provide local authorities and other external agencies with detailed information about pupils' progress and information on how funding has been spent.
20. Governors constantly check that the needs of pupils are being met, including access to buildings, the curriculum and information. In this way they ensure that the school continues to comply with the Equality Act (2010).

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders have created an appropriate curriculum that they adjust to meet the needs of every pupil in the school. Teachers and specialist staff work together to identify and implement strategies that enable pupils to make progress academically, socially and emotionally. This reflects the school's stated aim to give due emphasis to academic subjects and examinations, and support pupils' all-round personal development.
23. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning. Each pupil follows an individualised timetable that reflects their EHC plan. All pupils study mathematics, English, science and religious studies and choose from a range of humanities and languages. In lessons, pupils of all ages make good progress as measured against the specific targets set by their EHC plans.
24. Leaders closely integrate the classroom curriculum with support for each pupil's individual or additional needs. Leaders recognise that each pupil has a different profile of strengths and difficulties by customising strategies and support to enable each to meet their targets. Specialists work with classroom teachers in supporting pupils' development of speech and language and social communication. The impact of the support is regularly reviewed by both the school and the appropriate local authority.
25. Pupils gain a range of qualifications that correspond with their interests, needs and aspirations. These include GCSE examinations, as well as nationally recognised qualifications in functional mathematics and English. Teachers support a few more highly attaining pupils in their own self-study of level 3 extended project qualifications (EPQs) outside the main taught curriculum. Their results in these various examinations show that pupils make good academic progress from their various starting points.
26. Pupils study drama, design and technology and information communication technology (ICT) and successfully advance their creative skills. Senior school pupils take courses in home cooking, horticulture and touch-typing and hence start to develop both life and employability skills. Some pupils study in the sixth form if their needs are best met by remaining at school. They study more GCSEs, and courses in health and fitness, employability and managing money. Hence, they are well-prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
27. The Rowan base meets the needs of those secondary age pupils who have more complex needs. Pupils follow a tailored plan of work that reflects the needs identified in their EHC plan, and they receive specialised and continuous individual support. As a result, they invariably achieve their annual targets. Currently the sixth form does not provide options that meet the needs of these pupils. Leaders are in the early stages of creating a new course to develop more advanced life skills, for example the ability to travel independently on public transport or buy food in a café.
28. The curriculum is well planned with schemes of work that complement pupils' care plans. The taught curriculum is enhanced by a programme of activities. These include extended opportunities for sport, drama, creative arts, and chess. Many pupils take part in school trips that develop their confidence away from home. Pupils value these opportunities highly. Some senior pupils successfully complete a Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
29. Teachers have a secure and accurate knowledge of each pupil's aptitudes and plan each activity accordingly. They use approaches and resources that will best enable pupils to acquire knowledge

and increase their skills. They work closely with specialist help to ensure that pupils both find their tasks manageable and that they retain their interest. Practical activities are planned in lessons when these activities help pupils' progress. Written sheets are adjusted for each individual pupil and are effective in developing their understanding. Many pupils are supported by scribes, readers, or they use electronic devices to convert speech to text. Teachers and assistants have good knowledge of subject matter and a precise up-to-date understanding of approaches that successfully help pupils overcome their particular and varied learning barriers. Pupils speak proudly about the progress they make in lessons.

30. Leaders break down annual EHC plans into smaller individual plans (IPPs). Pupils' cognitive abilities are measured against national benchmarks at the start of Year 7 and Year 9. This informs the IPPs to set short term targets for pupils' academic progress. Teachers give continuous feedback and reassurance to pupils. They praise success and use it to encourage pupils to try more difficult work. For example, in history pupils quickly move from using word banks to develop the skill to draw out significant text from longer sources, and in mathematics calculate the side length of increasingly complex triangles. As a result of this approach pupils make good academic progress from their starting points.
31. Leaders recognise the contribution of recreational and social time to pupils' wellbeing. They provide time during the school day for pupils to relax, and a stimulating outdoor and indoor environment, including garden areas in which to sit.

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

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

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

33. Leaders and staff create an atmosphere of openness in all their interactions with pupils around the school. Pupils feel comfortable sharing their concerns and frustrations with a range of adults. Often these conversations are unplanned, arising out of chance meetings in corridors or the playground. Adults use language that adapts to pupils' individual needs, further reinforcing pupils' confidence to talk. Global messages about respect and tolerance are repeated regularly in assemblies and lessons.
34. Teachers use practical activities and concrete examples to support pupils in lessons. The school's chaplaincy team promotes pupils' spiritual awareness through weekly themes in assembly.
35. Pupils have a strong and informed awareness of their particular needs and many are keen to explain them. They contribute to the review of their EHC plans and IPPs. They are regularly asked for their views on the effectiveness of teaching strategies, of specialised support, or the curriculum they are following. Hence, they contribute to decisions made. This in turn builds their self-confidence.
36. Staff skilfully combine praise with an encouragement to attempt more difficult work or challenging activity. Pupils react positively to their successes, showing a developing self-esteem.
37. The school's speech and language team has adapted the language used in the relationship, sex and education (RSE) lessons in order to promote pupils' understanding. The content meets all the requirements. Teachers assess the risks and adjust their approaches if there are pupils with social or emotional needs. Pupils find lessons interesting and useful in supporting their relationships with each other.
38. Personal and health education meets the needs of pupils, and the content is adjusted to their developmental age. It includes a wide range of topics, centring on improving pupils' life-skills. Pupils enjoy discussions. They have an informed awareness of how to remain healthy. They appreciate the range of high-quality food available at lunch, which is a key social event in the day.
39. Teachers adjust activities and games so that those who have physical disabilities take part. Many pupils select sport as their lunchtime and/or Friday activity. Pupils have the opportunity to swim at a local pool. The occupational therapy (OT) team provide specialist support where a need is identified.
40. All pupils have an individualised mental health plan whose three stages reflect the level of assessed risk. Leaders have provided various supervised areas where pupils can receive extra emotional support during both lesson and break time. Records of use are analysed to look for any patterns, and if necessary pupils' individual timetables are amended.
41. Pupils express well-defined views on what is right and wrong. Teachers draw on this in lessons, for example in history and religious studies, to develop an understanding of morality in the wider world.
42. The school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying strategies contain guidance for parents and staff on identifying and reacting to any issues. Sanctions are clearly detailed. The procedures recognise the adjustments needed for pupils' emotional and social needs. Their implementation is successful in that incidents of misbehaviour and bullying are rare. When they do occur, they are recorded in

detail, although more systematic documentation would enable governors to maintain a more effective overview and identify any trends.

43. The vast majority of pupils have language and communication difficulties. As a result, they can sometimes misinterpret what is said to them by friends, particularly if they find socialising with others difficult. Teachers explain to pupils that whilst the school community adjusts to their social and emotional needs, there are different expectations in wider society. In this way, teachers are preparing pupils for life in the future.
44. Pupils are well-supervised at all times of the school day. Some pupils have continuous one-to-one support from an adult both in lessons and recreation time. The ubiquitous adult presence both underpins pupils' sense of security and ensures any potential friendship incidents are immediately addressed.
45. Governors ensure that the school's premises and accommodation meets applicable standards. It is constantly developed so that it provides accommodation and resources for pupils' medical, and therapy needs.
46. Where needed, pupils have personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) and personal accessibility plans (PAPs). Staff are trained to respond to the emergency needs of all pupils. Plans are reviewed annually. In this way, the school provides a safe site for pupils.
47. Leaders ensure that the school complies with relevant health and safety laws, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Records are kept of all relevant checks, but these are not systematically stored.
48. First aid is administered quickly when needed. Records of incidents, including accidents, are meticulously documented. Leaders regularly check to identify any patterns or concerns.
49. Admission and attendance registers are accurately kept. The school works closely with local authorities before admitting a pupil to the school and liaises with destination schools and colleges to ensure that courses and provision are suitable. Leaders understand their duty to report to the relevant local authority any pupil who joins or leaves at non-standard times in the school year.

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. The implementation of the curriculum promotes respect for all. Teachers carefully adjust activities so as not to undermine confidence, for example giving pupils choice around whether to present to the class first or last, or not at all. This has a powerful impact on pupils, who reflect these approaches in their own interactions. They understand that each pupil has different strengths but also barriers to joining in some activities.
52. The curriculum provides opportunities to widen pupils' cultural awareness. Pupils study Iberian culture in Spanish lessons, the music of Indonesia, *Monet's* art and classical texts such as the story of *Daedalus* in English. In drama pupils devised a piece based on *Banksy's* painting 'We are all in the same boat'. In each of these examples teachers skilfully draw out cultural differences using a range of practical activity. Pupils' insight is deepened through visits to museums and art galleries.
53. Teachers seize on opportunities to stress the importance of respecting differences in religious beliefs, gender or national background. Assemblies, different lunch menus and events mark particular religious festivals or national days. This is further developed in subjects such as English, history or RE, where teachers encourage high-attaining pupils to think more deeply about differences and commonality in faith or national attitudes.
54. Members of parliament, other local politicians from all parties, and other public figures make regular visits to the school. Pupils say they enjoy discussions with these visitors, and through this they start to gain an understanding of the structures of government in the country. Pupils hold hustings and vote for membership of the student council, and in this way appreciate the democratic process.
55. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in British society, either through the PSHE programme or certificated life skill courses. The home cooking course gives pupils skills to enable them to live independently, and touch-typing lessons prepare them for use of computers in employment.
56. Pupils are gradually prepared for their next stage through a careers programme that threads through the PSHE course. Pupils initially reflect on their own aptitudes, their achievements, and learn how to use the careers library. In Year 9 pupils focus on the skills needed for particular jobs. Local authority careers advisors work with school staff and all pupils to plan options after leaving school. Planning is integrated into pupils' EHC plans, and influences curriculum choices. Staff and advisors suggest aspirational but achievable targets, and ensure that pupils are well prepared for applications. As a result, pupils are offered places at sixth-form colleges and on apprenticeship schemes. In recent years, a few high-attaining pupils have gained places at university.
57. Pupils start to encounter the concept of buying and selling in the junior school. In the senior school pupils take modules on assertive budgeting, planning finance savings, how banks work, and plastic money. As a result, they have a good economic awareness that is shaped towards an understanding needed for the practicalities of daily life.
58. Senior pupils drawing on the principles of finance have learnt to devise fundraising activities for charity. The school has close links with a local hospice and supports national initiatives such as 'Red Nose Day'. The range of activity is deliberately narrow, which allows pupils to focus and develop esteem from being part of a successful community enterprise.

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

59. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

60. Leaders' approaches to policy, practice and implementation provide an effective approach to safeguarding pupils in their care. Leaders are alert to the contextual safeguarding risks of pupils who are all vulnerable because of their individual and additional needs. Safeguarding leaders liaise closely and frequently with specialist staff who are supporting pupils' social, emotional, behavioural and physical needs. Hence the school have an up-to-date and accurate knowledge of any changing risk to individual pupils. Almost all pupils have a risk management plan.
61. The school takes all reasonable steps to keep pupils secure physically and emotionally. Pupils say they feel safe. They receive regular teaching and guidance on how to protect themselves in school and the outside world, including online. They talk freely and frequently to a range of adults about their concerns.
62. Safeguarding leaders have an accurate and up-to-date knowledge of statutory guidance and advice and follow it rigorously.
63. Leaders work closely with relevant safeguarding partners, including external agencies such as children's services. This includes in handling any allegations against adults and referrals to the local authority designated officer. Procedures are followed effectively, and the school follows up advice promptly.
64. The training of staff is comprehensive and frequent. Staff feel well prepared to identify and address any safeguarding issues. Staff record and report potential issues without delay and in detail. Leaders review and act quickly on these reports. Currently the school is moving to an electronic system for reporting and recording information. Records contain detailed information about any incident, discussions with specialist staff and external agencies, and the rationale for decisions made.
65. Leaders put in place effective procedures to support all pupils involved in any safeguarding incident. Pastoral leaders have time to evaluate the impact of the support regularly and thoroughly so that adjustments can be made if necessary. They do this to see where they can be even more effective.
66. Governors have appointed a person with specific expertise to maintain oversight of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. In addition, the arrangements are regularly checked by local authorities who fund pupils' education at the school. The school has invested in additional software to support pupils' digital safety. New arrangements for the monitoring and filtering of online technology are effective.
67. All appropriate pre-employment and recruitment checks are made on adults before they come into contact with pupils. The record of these checks is well maintained and accurate.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

68. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Egerton-Rothesay School
Department for Education number	919/6062
Registered charity number	1091089
Address	Egerton-Rothesay School Durrants Lane Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 3UJ
Phone number	01442 865275
Email address	admin@eger-roth.co.uk
Website	www.eger-roth.co.uk
Proprietor	Egerton Rothesay
Chair	Mr David Vesey
Headteacher	Mr Colin Parker
Age range	6 to 19
Number of pupils	157
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2022

Information about the school

69. Egerton-Rothesay School is a co-educational day school. The school is divided into two sections on the same site, one for juniors and the other for seniors, including the sixth form. The school offers a curriculum that blends provision for those with special educational need and/or disability (SEND) and the opportunity to follow many elements of a mainstream curriculum.
70. All pupils have SEND. These include specific learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, social and emotional needs, autistic spectrum conditions and physical and medical needs. 147 pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
71. No pupils in the school have English as an additional language (EAL).
72. The school states its aims are to enable all pupils to achieve to their highest potential in a supportive setting with small classes and specialist input. It seeks to value and treat each pupil as an individual and to ensure they flourish within a Christian community; to prepare pupils fully for life after school, including due emphasis on academic subjects and examinations, but also by supporting their all-round personal development so that they can enter the adult world with well-justified confidence and effective life-skills.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

30 April to 2 May 2024

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

74. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, 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.

75. 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**.

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