



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Rougemont School
Llantarnam Hall
Malpas Road
NP20 6QB**

Date of inspection: November 2016

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

Summary

The pupils at Rougemont School make strong progress and achieve outstanding outcomes in public examinations. The school supports the wellbeing of all pupils exceptionally well. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have a highly positive attitude towards their studies. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have strong working relationships with pupils and plan interesting lessons. The co-curricular opportunities for pupils, including drama, sport, music and debating are a particular strength of the school. Through purposeful leadership and a clear vision, all staff have a strong commitment to the aspiration that 'all pupils achieve their highest potential'.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that all teachers plan learning experiences that challenge all pupils at a suitably high level

R2 Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning

Main findings

1: Standards

Excellent

The standards achieved by pupils across the school are extremely high, with many pupils making particularly good progress based on their attainment prior to entry to the school.

In the preparatory school, most pupils make strong progress in relation to their abilities. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in a range of standardised tests in spelling, reading and mathematics is high.

In the senior school, over the last three years, at key stage 4, pupils' performance in GCSE examinations is outstanding. Based on value-added measures, pupils' performance in many subjects exceeds expectations. During this period, nearly all pupils achieved the level 2 threshold (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grade A* to C including English and mathematics) and the core subject indicator (A* to C grade in English, mathematics and science). Around half of all GCSE grades were A* or A. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A* or A at GCSE is also high. In 2016, over half of pupils achieved this indicator, which is above the averages for independent schools and maintained schools in Wales.

In the sixth form, pupils' performance at A level over the last three years is strong. In a majority of subjects, pupils make good progress relative to their prior attainment, and in a minority of subjects, they make exceptional progress. For the last three years, around 50% of all A level grades were A* or A and about 70% of grades were A*- B. These outcomes are well above national averages. In 2016, around 22% of pupils achieved three A levels graded A* or A.

Across the school, there is little difference between the outcomes of boys and girls. Pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress.

For the last three years, no pupil has left the school without a recognised qualification. At the end of Year 11, all pupils remained in full-time education and at the end of Year 13 almost all pupils progressed to higher education.

Across the school, in most lessons, pupils make at least good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. In nearly all lessons, pupils listen attentively. They are articulate and confident when responding to questions, offering their thoughts or presenting to an audience. Nearly all pupils are confident readers and use a wide range of reading skills and strategies. For example, pupils scan texts to retrieve information effectively and skim documents to identify key ideas.

As pupils progress through the preparatory school, many write well for a suitable range of purposes such as writing recounts of trips they have undertaken. At the end of key stage 2, most pupils adapt their writing style appropriately to suit different purposes. For example, Year 6 pupils write diary entries about The Great Depression. By Year 11, many pupils produce thoughtful, well-constructed analyses of text, using expressive vocabulary.

Throughout the school, most pupils show strong numeracy skills in their mathematics lessons. They apply these skills successfully outside of these lessons, for example when calculating shopping bills in Year 6 and, key stage 4 pupils or when accurately drawing and interpreting time and distance graphs in GCSE physics.

Nearly all pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well in the preparatory school. For example, they create simple formulae in spreadsheets in Year 6. In the senior school, pupils develop these skills suitably in a few subjects across the curriculum.

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| 2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning | Excellent |
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Across the school, pupils have high levels of wellbeing and exceptional attitudes to learning. Nearly all pupils feel safe, cared for and nurtured.

Almost all pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy through diet and exercise. Most pupils make healthy food choices and many take part in the wide range of sporting activities that form part of the school's co-curricular programme. Nearly all pupils demonstrate a very caring attitude towards each other and share a determination that all pupils should be included in all activities within and beyond the classroom. Pupils are protective of and concerned for each other.

The behaviour of nearly all pupils in class and around the school is exemplary. Almost all pupils are confident in their manner and at ease in unfamiliar situations and with visitors to the school. They are welcoming and keen to share their pride in their school.

Nearly all pupils show highly positive attitudes towards their learning. They arrive at lessons promptly, with the correct equipment and ready to settle to their work quickly. During lessons pupils begin new tasks with little prompting. They pay close attention to instructions and rarely need to clarify what they need to do before starting to work. Almost all pupils engage enthusiastically in activities and sustain their concentration well. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other and work together effectively in pairs and groups. When given the opportunity, most pupils show high levels of independence and resilience when attempting challenging tasks.

Most pupils contribute very well to the life of the school through their involvement in clubs, performance, sport and charity events. A few pupils make exceptional contributions through their leadership of groups and committees such as the school council, eco club, charity committee, school houses and sports teams. These aspects of school-life make an extremely valuable contribution to pupils developing important social and life skills. Pupils are extremely proud of their contribution to the life of the school and its achievements.

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| 3: Teaching and learning experiences | Good |
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The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

In the preparatory school, a range of suitably stimulating learning experiences engages nearly all pupils effectively. At GCSE and A level, there is a worthwhile choice of academic courses that provides valuable learning experiences for all pupils. The school's extensive range of co-curricular activities are a strong feature of its work. It supports the curriculum effectively and makes a notable contribution to the high standard of pupils' wellbeing. For example, the range of visits during the senior school activity week provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of other cultures and languages.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Staff have strong working relationships with pupils that contribute positively to pupils' outstanding outcomes.

Most teachers plan interesting lessons, using a wide range of well-prepared resources. These teachers are skilful in using a range of questioning and discussion techniques that allow them to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding successfully. They explain ideas carefully, ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of what is required of them during learning activities. Teachers ensure that they deploy learning support assistants efficiently and this has a notable impact on the quality of pupils' learning, especially in the preparatory school.

Many teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to meet the full range of pupils' needs. As a result, they do not always challenge pupils well, particularly the more able. A very few teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work independently. In these lessons, pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

Many teachers provide pupils with useful oral feedback during lessons, which helps pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work. However, written feedback to pupils varies too much across the school. In the best practice, feedback focusses well on how pupils can improve their work and, during the lesson, the teacher provides opportunities for pupils to respond. This practice is not consistent across the school.

In the preparatory school, planning for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills identifies clearly the knowledge and skills that teachers will deliver in these areas in each subject. In the senior school, planning for the development and application of these skills across the curriculum is less well developed.

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| 4: Care, support and guidance | Excellent |
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The school's care, support and guidance for pupils fosters their wellbeing exceptionally well. It ensures that pupils have opportunities to thrive in their academic, social and emotional development.

There are thorough systems to track and monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. Arrangements to identify and support those pupils with additional learning needs are of a particular high quality. Specialist staff, from the school's Learning Development Centre, provide useful guidance for teachers about each of these pupils' needs. Staff access the information using the school's intranet portal and use the information appropriately to inform their lesson planning. Teachers use

the portal effectively to alert relevant colleagues immediately to any day-to-day incidents that may affect a pupil's wellbeing. The school arranges beneficial interventions to support pupils, when necessary, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The school counsellor and pastoral teams ensure that there is high quality support for pupils with social, emotional or behavioural needs.

The school establishes strong relationships with parents, who are well-informed about their child's progress. Arrangements include detailed progress reports and regular parents' evenings. Access to information about the curriculum and homework assignments on the school's portal enables parents to support their child's learning at home. The school website and many publications provide parents with a full picture of the school's activities.

The programme to support pupils' physical, social, health and emotional development is wide-ranging and includes, for example, age-appropriate guidance about personal safety. There are also appropriate arrangements to encourage pupils to develop healthy lifestyles, including in relation to healthy eating and drinking. In school assemblies and religious education lessons, pupils are able to reflect on, and learn to value each other's differences. The school is particularly effective in providing opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and play an active part in school life, for example as school councillors in the preparatory school. These pupils are voted for by their peers having submitted an application explaining the changes they would like to see in the school. These extensive opportunities promote pupils' wellbeing and help them learn to respect each other, and prepare them well for adult life.

The school offers many stimulating and imaginative co-curricular opportunities for pupils of all ages. The outstanding range of activities and residential visits contribute particularly well to pupils' cultural awareness and development. For example, pupils have visited galleries and museums in New York, participated in a range of music and drama productions and represented the school in many sporting events. In addition, the recently introduced key stage 3 award provides all pupils in Year 7 with the opportunity to develop their independent learning skills. They gain success through for example, extended academic projects and charity work. Many older pupils continue to challenge themselves further by participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. All pupils are encouraged to be active citizens in the wider community and this is reflected in the community service completed as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the substantial sums of money that pupils raise for local charities.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

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| 5: Leadership and management | Excellent |
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Leadership across the school is reflective and forward-looking. It contributes substantially to pupils' exceptional levels of wellbeing and the excellent standards they achieve. The senior leadership team have created a strong learning community and achieved significant improvements in the accommodation and resources.

The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and strongly promotes a clear vision of a friendly, inclusive community and the aspiration that 'all pupils achieve their highest potential'. Across the school, there is a powerful shared sense of purpose and commitment to these values and ambitions. The senior leadership team provides clear direction and sets out high expectations for all areas of the school's work. These are clearly outlined in informative policy documents and detailed job descriptions that focus appropriately on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. These expectations are communicated well in the extensive range of meetings at all levels. Meetings and regular briefings are an effective means of sharing information, ensuring the efficient day-to-day operation of the school and for reviewing pupils' performance and wellbeing. Staff are well supported through clear line-management arrangements.

Through a structured programme of monitoring activities and departmental reviews, leaders identify the principal strengths and areas for improvement in the school's work that help inform development planning. Senior and middle leaders use an extensive range of data effectively, for example to evaluate pupils' achievements and progress. There are suitable arrangements to consider the views of pupils and parents. However, overall, monitoring activities by leaders, such as lesson observations and book scrutiny, are too generous.

The school has a successful track record of sustained strong pupil performance and for improving the learning environment. The strategic improvement plan is an extremely detailed document that includes specific sections covering both pastoral and curricular areas. It identifies an extensive range of actions, for example to improve standards and provision. Yet the plan does not always identify the main priorities clearly enough, and links between targets in departmental plans and the school improvement plan are not always clear.

The governing body has a secure understanding of the school's performance and contributes appropriately to help determine the school's strategic priorities. It provides effective oversight of the school's work. Members of the governing body offer constructive support to the leadership team and provide valuable professional expertise in specific areas of the school's work.

The school manages its resources effectively. The well-qualified teaching staff deliver the curriculum effectively and make a substantial contribution to the school's co-curricular programme. Professional development review procedures provide an effective means for staff to reflect on their contribution to all aspects of school life. They support staff well in identifying relevant professional development opportunities. Many staff benefit from taking part in a broad range of professional development activities that reflect school priorities and personal aspirations.

Together with the governing body and the business manager, senior leaders manage the school's finances robustly with funding allocated appropriately to clearly identified priorities. This has enabled the school to make significant improvements to the quality of accommodation and the high-quality resources that provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

About the school

Rougemont School is an independent day school that educates boys and girls from the age of 3 to 18 years. The school was founded in the early 1920s and is situated on a large site between Newport and Cwmbran. The school is administered by a board of governors.

There are currently 544 pupils on roll. These include 19 pupils in the nursery and 180 in the preparatory school. In the senior school, there are 244 pupils aged from 11 to 16 years, and 101 in the sixth form. There is little difference in the total number of boys and girls although the balance varies in year groups across the school.

Almost all pupils live in Newport and Torfaen, with a few travelling from further afield in south Wales. About 15% of pupils are from minority-ethnic backgrounds. All pupils speak English fluently although a few speak other languages as their first language. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school provides additional learning support to about 8% of pupils. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Pupils may join the school at any stage depending upon the availability of places. There are admissions assessments in mathematics and English for pupils to enter the preparatory school. Pupils in Year 6 are generally offered admission to the senior school. New pupils who wish to join the senior school in Year 7 are assessed in mathematics, verbal reasoning and non-verbal reasoning. At other times, the school considers pupils for entry after trial days and assessment in English and mathematics. The school requires pupils wishing to join the sixth form to have a minimum of five B grades at GCSE.

Estyn last inspected the school in November 2011.

The headteacher was appointed in 2014. The restructured senior management team comprises of the head of the preparatory school, the deputy headteacher (senior school), a business manager and an operations manager.

The school describes its ethos and aims as follows: 'to help each pupil realise his or her academic potential by offering an all-round education which will prepare each pupil to play an independent, confident and successful role in the world beyond school.'

Appendix 1: Summary table of inspection areas

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| Standards | Excellent |
| Wellbeing and attitudes to learning | Excellent |
| Teaching and learning experiences | Good |
| Care, support and guidance | Excellent |
| Leadership and management | Excellent |

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

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| Excellent | Strong, sustained performance and practice |
| Good | Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement |
| Adequate, needs improvement | Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement |
| Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement | Important weaknesses outweigh strengths |

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

We used this inspection to pilot developments to the common inspection framework, the inspection process and the inspection report format. We will review these arrangements and make any changes required before introducing them nationally in September 2017.

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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