



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

RUSSELL HOUSE SCHOOL

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Russell House School

Full Name of School	Russell House School
DfE Number	886/6039
EYFS Number	EY357258
Address	Russell House School Station Road Otford Sevenoaks Kent TN14 5QU
Telephone Number	01959 522352
Fax Number	01959 524913
Email Address	enquiries@russellhouse.kent.sch.uk
Head	Mr Craig McCarthy
Proprietor	Dr Yvonne Lindsay
Age Range	2 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	192
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (99 boys; 93 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 9 5-11: 126 3-5 (EYFS): 57
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Caroline Chaffé
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	30 Apr 2013 to 01 May 2013

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection occurs over a period of two continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in May 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Chris Manville

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Elizabeth Crawley

Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Russell House is a proprietorial preparatory school for boys and girls from the ages of two to eleven. Established in Otford, Kent in 1938, the school is currently under the ownership of Russell House School Ltd. There is a governor advisory body comprising three company directors and two external members who administer the school. The current head has been in post since September 2012.
- 1.2 The aims of the school are to provide high quality inspirational education in a happy environment enabling each pupil to achieve his or her full potential. The school strives to encourage each pupil to achieve beyond expectations and to be fully prepared for the next stage of education. It seeks to foster motivation, intellectual curiosity and self-confidence, balanced with consideration for others, enabling pupils to embrace life's diverse challenges.
- 1.3 The original building has been extended and added to over many years, and to the rear of the site are extensive grounds with woodland and tarmac playing areas and a large playing field. The school roll currently stands at 192 pupils. Of these, 66 children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with nine under the age of three. The EYFS consists of four classes: Russell Robins (2 to 3 year olds), Nursery (3 year olds), Transition (3 to 4 year olds) and Form 1 (4 to 5 year olds). Children in the EYFS have access to a range of outdoor areas, some of which are directly accessible from the classrooms, and share facilities such as the library, music room, dining room/Old Hall, the Russell Hall, the science laboratory, and the information and communication technology (ICT) suite with the rest of the school.
- 1.4 Two children in the EYFS have been identified by the school as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and receive additional support; none has a statement of special educational needs, and no-one is learning English as an additional language (EAL). The majority of pupils are British and have parents who work as professionals either locally or in London.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Russell Robins	Nursery (2-3 years)
Nursery	Nursery (3 year olds)
Transition	Nursery (3-4 years)
Form 1	Reception

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.1 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure planning takes into account the assessment of prior learning and reflects children's individual interests.
 2. Share the best practice already within the setting to support children's creative and critical thinking in adult-initiated activities.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 3.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Stimulating, imaginatively resourced classrooms motivate self-directed play alongside an appropriate balance of adult-initiated activities. Provision is outstanding across all areas of learning and development. Outdoor areas are well-equipped and excellent use is made of the wider school grounds for growing vegetables and nature walks.
- 3.2 Adults support children's learning extremely well. Comprehensive procedures identify and support those children with SEND. Good questioning promotes creative and critical thinking but is used inconsistently, particularly during adult-initiated activities, so more able children are not challenged to go beyond the given task. Children under the age of three benefit from specialist teaching in music and physical education, with ICT, ballet, swimming and games added to the curriculum for older children.
- 3.3 Adults have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the EYFS and child development. They are well qualified with a broad range of experience and expertise. Observations are used very well to record and evaluate learning but planning does not fully reflect the children's individual interests.
- 3.4 Parents are exceptionally supportive of the setting, expressing unanimous satisfaction with all aspects of the provision in the pre-inspection questionnaire. They contribute greatly to children's experiences, for example making a wide range of story sacks, and they are kept very well informed about children's progress through regular, detailed reports and meetings with staff.

3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 3.5 Provision for children's well-being in the EYFS is outstanding. The highly effective key persons form the basis of excellent partnerships with parents and warm, affectionate relationships between staff and all children. Children approach familiar adults, who are extremely sensitive to their needs, with confidence. Staff are polite and respectful to the children and to each other. Clear expectations and consistent boundaries promote considerate behaviour from a very young age. Consistent implementation of policies and procedures creates a safe and secure environment where children's welfare is paramount.
- 3.6 Older children become independent and responsible, as they are encouraged to do things for themselves, such as return resources to the shed at the end of an outdoor play session. Staff support the development of personal hygiene skills as part of the daily routine for the younger ones. Home-cooked, tasty lunches help children to understand the importance of healthy eating, and regular physical education (PE) sessions, often including parachute play or dancing with scarves, promote a positive attitude to exercise and a healthy lifestyle.
- 3.7 Transitions between the EYFS classes are staggered to ensure that children move only when they are ready to do so. A sensitive programme of shared activities with

older children prepares them extremely well for the transition to the next stage of their education.

3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 3.8 The effectiveness of leadership and management in the EYFS is outstanding. The proprietor and governor advisory board maintain a close and highly effective oversight of the EYFS, ensuring that all obligations pertaining to regulatory compliance are fulfilled and upholding the school's aims. Senior staff provide strong leadership to the well-qualified, dedicated team. Educational programmes are carefully monitored to ensure they meet the needs of all children.
- 3.9 Safeguarding and welfare policies are regularly reviewed and robust, and staff training in child protection is undertaken periodically. Recruitment practices are secure with all statutory checks completed and accurately recorded prior to appointment. Staff know and understand their responsibilities and all procedures are securely embedded in practice. Children are well cared for and staff are carefully deployed to ensure appropriate levels of supervision at all times so the environment is safe and welcoming.
- 3.10 Reflective practice, regular staff meetings and self-evaluation to which all staff contribute supports the commitment to continuous improvement. Staff feel highly valued and very well supported through regular supervision and appraisal. They attend a wide range of courses to update and extend their knowledge and skills, which they cascade to their colleagues. Staff work extremely closely with parents and external agencies to secure appropriate support for those children with additional needs.

3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.11 The quality and standards in the EYFS are outstanding. All children, including those under the age of three and those with SEND, receive a broad and balanced curriculum in a caring environment, so that most children make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points, abilities and needs. The majority of children exceed the expected levels of attainment by the end of Reception.
- 3.12 Children are extremely happy and enthusiastic, showing wonder and excitement at the discoveries they make. They are creative, critical thinkers and problem solvers, particularly when engaged in self-initiated activities such as designing a ramp for toy cars.
- 3.13 Children under three make rapid progress, becoming confident communicators as they talk about their experiences in response to photographs or activities they have done at home. Older children develop excellent spatial awareness as they propel and steer ride-on toys. In Reception children gain a secure foundation in letters and sounds and begin to use a range of mathematical concepts such as sequencing numbers around a clock.
- 3.14 Children feel safe and secure due to the diligent implementation of policies and procedures. Their safeguarding is given a high priority. Behaviour is exemplary. Children are kind, considerate and co-operate exceptionally well with each other. They respond quickly and confidently to the expectations of the adults who care for them.

- 3.15 The setting has met two of the recommendations from the previous inspection: outdoor areas have been improved, and there are increased opportunities for children to investigate through self-directed activity. However, links between assessment and planning are not yet fully developed. The leadership and management team have shown their commitment to continued improvement.