EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

RYE ST ANTONY SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017

SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Rye St Antony School			
DfE number	931/6070			
Registered charity number	309685			
Address	Rye St Antony School Pullen's Lane Oxford Oxfordshire OX3 0BY			
Telephone number	01865 762802			
Email address	headmistress@ryestantony.co.uk			
Headmistress	Miss Alison Jones			
Chair of governors	Mrs Hilary Stafford Northcote			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	325			
	Boys	38	**Girls**	287
	Day pupils	273	**Boarders**	52
	EYFS	24	**Prep**	73
	Seniors	171	**Sixth Form**	57
Inspection dates	1 to 2 February 2017			

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PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

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 specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

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INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Richard Mannix	Reporting inspector
Mrs Fiona Thomas	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Dr Olwen Wright	Team inspector (Senior leader, ISA school)
Miss Margaret Connell	Team inspector (Former principal, GSA school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

1.1 Rye St Antony School is an independent Catholic day and boarding school for boys aged up to 11 years and girls up to the age of 18. The school was founded in 1930 in central Oxford and moved to its present site in 1939. The school is a charitable trust managed by a board of fourteen governors, five of whom are trustees of the charity. Since the previous inspection, a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite and food technology centre have been opened.

1.2 The school is structured into four departments: the early years foundation stage (EYFS), the prep school (years 1 to 6), the senior school (years 7 to 11), and the sixth form (years 12 and 13). Boarding is offered to girls aged eight years and over. The school does not arrange any educational guardians or lodgings.

What the school seeks to do

1.3 The school aims to provide an environment which enables all pupils to reach their full potential. It seeks to genuinely reflect the religious, artistic, moral and intellectual ethos of the Catholic tradition. The school intends that all school members should be treated with respect, kindness and fairness, and that pupils should be mindful of their responsibilities to the school and the wider community.

About the pupils

1.4 The pupils come from a variety of backgrounds which represent the area surrounding the school. The school has identified 88 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 42 of whom receive additional specialist support with dyslexia and dyspraxia. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. There are 50 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), 20 of whom receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school identify a changing number of most able pupils in the school's population at different times, and the curriculum is modified for them.

1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in May 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:

- Develop a whole school framework for monitoring and evaluating the quality of marking, assessment and teaching.
- Revise procedures for pupil observations and assessment to strengthen planning in the EYFS.

1.7 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in May 2014 was to:

- Replace written references to the Children's Rights Director with information about and the contact details of the recently established Office of the Children's Commissioner.

1.8 The school has successfully met the recommendations of the previous inspections.

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2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils are highly articulate, mature and responsive young people who exhibit extremely positive attitudes towards their own learning.
- Pupils demonstrate outstanding study skills and are extremely capable of developing their own learning.
- Pupils exhibit excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects.
- All groups of pupils achieve very well in relation to their abilities.
- In the junior school, pupils' development of writing skills is sometimes restricted when opportunities to write at length are limited.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils' substantial self-confidence and self-knowledge enable them to work extremely effectively with others.
- Pupils contribute very strongly to the school and the wider community.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They behave extremely well towards others and treat each other with very high levels of respect and consideration.

Recommendations

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Give junior school pupils more opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum.

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3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.2 Pupils demonstrate outstanding attitudes towards learning throughout the school. In the junior school, pupils are confident to try new things and are highly resilient if faced with any obstacles. In the senior school, pupils plan and organise their work very effectively, and enjoy using their excellent study skills to enhance their learning and make rapid progress. Pupils are engaged and active participants in the classroom, very much enjoying each other's company as they learn. Very well planned and imaginative teaching engages pupils and supports their excellent learning. Knowledgeable teachers utilise the well-organised curriculum to provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their study skills across all subjects.

3.3 Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills. They speak very well, read with great enjoyment and listen to their teachers with much focus and concentration. However, in the junior school, pupils' development of writing skills is sometimes restricted when opportunities to write at length are limited. Pupils also show substantial competency in numeracy and ICT skills from an early age. Effective ICT provision, and an excellent and well-used central school library, provide pupils with resources that develop their higher order skills, such as researching, analysing and hypothesising, extremely well. Teachers ensure that the most able pupils receive the challenge and support they need to extend their skills in these areas very well, as evidenced by discussions with pupils, scrutiny of pupils' books and lesson observations.

3.4 Pupils, including the youngest, show extensive initiative, independence and decision-making skills, which greatly enhance their understanding across all areas of the curriculum. They enjoy a collaborative approach to their learning, well-structured lessons, and carefully designed practical work, all of which support their learning and progress very well. For example, in one reception class lesson, children had to decide where to hide sand trays in the forest so they could see animal footprints. Similarly, senior school pupils demonstrated their initiative and decision-making skills extremely well while devising projects for the annual school science fair.

3.5 Pupils throughout the school show a strong and active engagement in their learning. They use their study time well to consolidate their knowledge and understanding, and make excellent use of a wide range of sources in their work. The warm and trusting relationship between teachers and their pupils ensures that pupils feel very well supported, both in class and in their extra-curricular activities. The teachers' high expectations, in pacey and enjoyable lessons and extra-curricular sessions observed, makes a substantial contribution to the highly successful pupil outcomes. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they strongly appreciated the large amount of extra support that they feel is always on offer from their teachers.

3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2015. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE and A-level results have been above the national average for maintained schools. The junior school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence shows attainment in reading and spelling to be above national age-related expectations, and attainment in mathematics to be in line with national age-related expectations.

3.7 All groups of pupils, including those who have SEND or EAL and the most able, make excellent progress and achieve very well in relation to their abilities, as evidenced through the school's own data, lesson observations, and scrutiny of pupils' books. Leaders ensure that staff support pupils with particular learning needs extremely effectively. Teachers are sensitive and informed in their approach, and make certain that individual pupils receive the support that they need to make excellent progress. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that teaching enabled their child to make good progress and develop skills for the future, and that their child's educational needs are met effectively by the school. Similarly, most pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that

the school gave them the opportunity to learn and make good progress. The school fully meets its aim to enable all pupils to reach their full potential.

3.8 Pupils participate fully and enjoy notable success in a comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer in the school. Individual and group achievement in a wide range of sports is very good in relation to the size of school, and pupils of all abilities feel very much included in this achievement. In the questionnaire, a very large majority of pupils and parents felt that there was a good range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils achieve very well in many competitions, such as mathematics challenges and external drama exams, and the artwork on display is of an excellent standard. Most pupils are successful in gaining places at the universities of their choice.

3.9 Pupils have a very good understanding of the standard of their work in each subject and how to improve and make progress. This is because teachers' marking includes clear and helpful advice which enable pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Leaders have introduced a new framework for assessing pupils which enables staff to support pupils' progress extremely well. Leadership and management of the teaching provision ensures that pupils are provided with well-qualified teachers with an infectious enthusiasm for their subjects, and that class numbers are small enough for staff to be able to support individual pupils' learning very well.

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4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

4.2 Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate outstanding self-knowledge and self-esteem and excellent levels of maturity. They have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and know how they can develop and progress as young adults. Pupils have open, friendly and confident personalities and this has a very positive influence on how they conduct themselves. Pupils show high levels of resilience and perseverance in their approach to challenges, whether in academic or extra-curricular activities. This contributes significantly to their achievements and it helps them understand clearly that the decisions they make are important and that they can greatly influence their future success. The school's ethos of believing in the individual and encouraging pupils to believe in themselves strongly supports these positive outcomes for pupils. Pupils' extremely high levels of self-confidence and resilience prepare them extremely well for transitions between one class and the next while in the school, and for their eventual move to future education or employment.

4.3 The pupils are at ease with themselves and they fully appreciate their place in the school community. They have a great appreciation of their physical surroundings and of the quiet spaces available to them for reflection. The school's ethos and aims are highly instrumental in developing pupils' excellent personal traits, and staff's excellent modelling of spiritual attitudes further enhances pupils' appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.

4.4 The pupils have an outstanding sense of fair play and are very clear on the distinction between right and wrong. They have a very effective understanding of the school rules and their importance, as the school encourages pupils to consider the moral importance of abiding by rules that exist for the benefit of the community as a whole. As a result, pupils behave extremely well towards others and treat each other with very high levels of respect and consideration. The school embraces the self-management of behaviour, which is engendered from an early age, and fully meets its aim to encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their own actions. Pupils appreciate that they are trusted to behave well and live up to this responsibility in a very mature fashion. Pupils are able to challenge misbehaviour and unkindness. They show no tolerance of bullying and they are fully aware of the appropriate action to take should they encounter any such incidents. The teachers and staff set an excellent example in this regard, and pupils commented that teachers make clear the principles they applied with regard to determining what is right and wrong. Pupils' excellent moral sensibilities are promoted by the school ethos, which leaders have successfully embedded across the school and through specific aspects of the school's provision, such as the lessons in religious studies and ethics.

4.5 Children and pupils know who can be regarded as a trusted adult to whom they can turn. Pupils have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe, both physically and when using the internet, and they readily seek advice if unsure. As pupils progress through the school, they continue to show a very clear understanding of the importance of keeping safe and of the role of diet, exercise and a balanced lifestyle in a future healthy life. The school strongly promotes the health and well-being of pupils across the curriculum, providing them with many opportunities for physical exercise. Older pupils learn about the impact of mental health issues, and display a sensitive understanding of the possible impact of mental illness on individuals and their wider communities.

4.6 Pupils show great sensitivity to the needs of others. They are very welcoming and inclusive towards those with backgrounds different from their own, in line with the school's aim that all school members should be treated with respect, kindness and fairness, and that pupils should be mindful of their responsibilities to the school and the wider community. Pupils are happy to seek an understanding of other cultures and faiths and to promote and discuss their own religious and cultural values in a sensitive manner. They demonstrate a deep appreciation of fundamental British values and the importance of democratic processes and public institutions. In discussions, senior pupils displayed a clear view of the dangers posed by those in the world who seek to stifle differing opinions and healthy debate.

4.7 Pupils are enthusiastic in their arguments and hold informed opinions in discussions both inside and out of the classroom. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that when discussing politics and current affairs, the teachers did not always give a balanced view. However, evidence from discussions with pupils and staff, work scrutiny and lesson observations indicates that, although there is often healthy debate which reflects different points of view, such exchanges of views are always organised objectively and fairly.

4.8 Pupils show great sensitivity to other individuals and are keen that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds and circumstances, are welcomed into the school community. Pupils understand and appreciate the fact that they all have different needs, and they are happy to celebrate each other's achievements and successes. Those pupils with particular gifts and talents are strongly encouraged to achieve at the highest level by both their peers and the school as a whole, in line with the school's aim to enable all pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils possess a great willingness to support those less fortunate than themselves, with the majority of pupils involved in activities that benefit others, such as charitable fund raising and voluntary work. The school fully meets its aim to genuinely reflect the religious, moral and intellectual ethos of the Catholic tradition.

4.9 Pupils, including the boarders, form excellent relationships with each other and enjoy collaborating and supporting each other on communal enterprises that work towards a common goal, such as fund raising for charities and helping in the local community. The school community, including the boarding houses, values diversity and shows support and tolerance of others. The older pupils and adults, both in the school and the boarding houses, set an excellent example for the younger pupils. Prefects or 'Patricians' are well respected and have a positive influence, particularly on the younger pupils in the house. Pupils are enthusiastic about contributing to the school and house democratic processes through the school councils, house councils and other committees.

4.10 Pupils think critically and show a strong maturity with regard to economic, environmental and social matters. Leaders ensure, through the provision of highly effective pastoral care and the entirely successful implementation of the school's ethos, that pupils leave the school having developed the necessary skills and confidence to prepare them well for the next stages of their lives.

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