



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Rougemont School

**Llantarnam Hall
Malpas Road
Newport
NP20 6QB**

Date of inspection: November 2011

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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.

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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

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

There are currently 618 pupils on roll. These include 12 pupils in the nursery and 193 in the preparatory school. In the senior school, there are 298 pupils aged from 11 to 16 years, and 114 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 European or Asian languages as their first language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school offers additional learning support, mainly for specific learning needs in literacy, to about 7% of pupils. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

Pupils may join the school at any stage depending on the availability of places. There are admissions tests 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 five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C.

The school was last inspected by Estyn in March 2006.

The school's senior management arrangements were restructured in 2010. The former separate infant and junior departments were amalgamated into the on-site preparatory school with its own headteacher. The senior school now has two deputy headteachers, with dedicated responsibility for academic work and pastoral care respectively. The current post-holders of each of these three posts were previously senior managers in the school.

In this report, within the preparatory school:

- the Foundation Phase refers to pupils aged 3 to 7 years; and
- key stage 2 refers to pupils aged 7 to 11 years.

The senior school refers to pupils aged 11 to 18 years.

Summary

The school's current performance	Excellent
The school's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

The current performance of Rougemont School is excellent because:

- from a young age, pupils develop skills that equip them very effectively for learning;
- all pupils make at least good progress;
- most pupils attain excellent results in external examinations at key stage 4 and post-16;
- pupils have a well-developed sense of community and their behaviour is exemplary;
- a wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes very well to pupils' social and personal development;
- the school offers well-focussed, individualised support that promotes pupils' academic achievement and enjoyment in learning very effectively; and
- the well-maintained buildings and grounds, spacious classrooms and specialist teaching areas provide an excellent learning environment.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for the improvement are excellent because:

- senior managers provide clear leadership and have very high expectations of pupils;
- governors know the school very well and challenge the school effectively to bring about improvement;
- there is a rigorous and very effective process of self-evaluation that draws appropriately on first-hand knowledge and links directly to improvement planning;
- the school has a strong track record of making significant improvements in standards and provision; and
- the school makes excellent use of its resources to achieve outstanding outcomes for pupils.

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

In order to improve further, the school should:

- R1 monitor the provision for literacy more closely to ensure that pupils have suitable opportunities to develop their extended writing skills across the curriculum;
- R2 make sure that teaching is planned well to meet the needs of all pupils;
- R3 monitor the performance of new entrants to Year 7 as a group, to check that they make suitable progress as they move through the school; and
- R4 strengthen the co-ordination and quality of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs other than dyslexia.

What happens next?

Estyn advises the governing body to revise its current development plan to show what action 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 at the school.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

Throughout the school, pupils have a wide range of abilities. Overall pupils make very good progress and most attain excellent results in external examinations at key stage 4 and post-16. The data show that the school adds significant value to pupils' baseline abilities.

In the preparatory school, most pupils' attainment in a range of regularly administered standardised tests, for example in reading, spelling and mathematics, is above national averages. The data indicate that all pupils make good progress and the more able make particularly good progress over time.

Pupils' performance at GCSE and A level is very strong when compared with other schools. Results are well above local and national averages. In 2011, 98% of Year 11 pupils attained the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics. Over the last three years, 99% of pupils have attained passes at grades A*-C in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Overall at GCSE, pupils attain consistently high grades, particularly in the core subjects. These place the school amongst the highest performing schools in Wales.

Over the last three years, 74% of A level entries were graded A*-B compared with a national average of 52%. Pupils make particularly good progress when compared with their prior attainment. During this period, no pupils have left the school without a qualification.

All pupils in the Foundation Phase make good and sometimes very good progress in developing their literacy skills. Most of them engage very well in oral work and respond readily and sensibly to questions. They recount events in stories they have read and written themselves, and respond very well to opportunities for drama. Almost all pupils develop good writing skills, using a wide range of vocabulary and well-formed cursive handwriting.

Throughout the preparatory school, pupils make very good progress in developing reading skills. A few pupils who join the school later in key stage 2 with weak phonic skills gain confidence and develop their ability enough to decode unfamiliar words. Nearly all pupils read fluently, accurately and with enjoyment by the end of key stage 2. They have a strong interest in reading and read a large number and wide range of books.

In key stage 2, pupils enjoy class discussion and have well-developed oral skills. The quality of their writing is variable. Most pupils write well. They understand how to write for different purposes and audiences, and use a wide range of interesting vocabulary. The most able use information and communication technology to word-process stories of outstanding quality. However, pupils make many small technical mistakes in their unaided work and pay too little attention to presentation.

Throughout the senior school pupils have very good levels of oracy. They share ideas well, make valid hypotheses and encourage each other openly in a mature manner. Most pupils show excellent understanding of technical vocabulary across a range of subjects. They write very well and extensively, taking good account of different scenarios and using language appropriately. Overall standards in reading are very good and enable pupils to extend their independent learning. However, in modern foreign languages lessons pupils lack confidence in speaking.

From a young age, almost all pupils develop very strong numeracy, information and communication technology, and thinking skills that equip them very well for learning as they progress through the school. They learn to evaluate their own and each other's work effectively and with sensitivity.

Overall, the performance of boys is slightly better than for girls and this is unusual nationally. Pupils with additional learning needs, and particularly those diagnosed with dyslexia, make good progress.

At the end of Year 11, most pupils join the sixth form whilst a few continue in further education elsewhere. All sixth-form pupils progress to appropriate higher education courses with many following courses in science, mathematics or engineering based subjects.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Standards of pupils' wellbeing are excellent. Pupils at all stages across the school are very keen to learn within and outside the classroom. They respond very positively to the school's open and friendly culture. They are very confident to ask for help from teachers, other adults and other pupils when they need it.

Pupils have a very well-developed sense of community. Their standards of behaviour within lessons and around the school are excellent. Pupils are very respectful and supportive of each other, the staff and visitors.

Most pupils across the school have a very good understanding of the benefits of a balanced diet and lifestyle. Most pupils make excellent use of the extensive range of extra-curricular activities to exercise and to develop their personal interests.

All pupils surveyed say they feel safe in school. They know to whom to turn if they have problems. They are very confident that staff will listen to their problems and will take action to help them solve them.

Through the personal and social education programme, pupils develop valuable knowledge and understanding of important issues, such as relationships, personal safety, sexual health, substance misuse and careers.

Pupils understand very well how to express their views and make suggestions about how to improve the school, for example via the school council. Pupils receive regular feedback on their suggestions and most pupils understand why some of their suggestions cannot be met.

Most pupils take part regularly in school charity activities and raise money successfully for their chosen causes. They have a very good understanding of the principles which underpin Fair Trade.

Many pupils take a very keen interest in ecological matters. The eco-committees are made up of pupils from across the school. They undertake many activities to improve the school and the Green Flag has been awarded to the school in recognition of their achievements.

Attendance rates have been consistently very high over the past three years and above the national average. There have been no unauthorised absences or permanent exclusions.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a wide, well-balanced and effective curriculum for pupils in both the preparatory and senior schools. It fully meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. The senior school provides a very good choice of academic courses at both GCSE and A level that enables pupils of all abilities to progress successfully to the next stage of learning. The preparatory school gives pupils a coherent and well-embedded programme which is developed appropriately through the infant and junior stages.

The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive and popular, and the school amends the programme often to meet the needs and demands of pupils in both sections of the school. These activities contribute very well to pupils' social and personal development. Participation in cultural, artistic, voluntary and sporting activities including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme helps promote pupils' wider academic progress.

Pupils in both sections of the school have good opportunities to take part in work-related activities that prepare them well for the world of work. These include visits from senior staff in business and the professions to Year 6 classes, which is followed up by career-related activities. Many pupils in Year 12 take part in engineering challenges that enable them to gain a wide range of work-related skills.

Provision for the development of pupils' skills is generally good. However, while literacy skills are developed well in English and most subjects in the preparatory school, the opportunities for the development of literacy and communication are not embedded well enough in the curriculum in most other subjects, especially in the senior school.

The school, especially through extra-curricular activities, promotes the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the culture of Wales well. Subject-specific displays, especially in English, geography and history, contribute well to this work.

Pupils throughout the school have excellent opportunities to learn about sustainability. They learn about the school's practices in reducing waste, recycling, minimising water and carbon use by carrying out audits as well as participating

actively in the school's eco committees. Pupils are encouraged well to participate actively in projects that support voluntary work projects in developing countries. These promote their understanding of the wider world very well.

Teaching: Good

In all classes observed in the Foundation Phase, and in most classes for older pupils, teaching is good. Generally, teachers across the school plan their lessons well. Most set out clear learning objectives and have appropriately high expectations for pupils, especially the more able. Teachers encourage and support learners well in oral work. They ask probing questions and often encourage pupils to extend their answers or to explain their ideas further.

Most teachers use a suitably wide range of strategies, techniques and resources to interest and engage pupils, for example through physical, dramatic and creative activities in the Foundation Phase. The teaching of mathematics and science in the senior school is often of high quality. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well as the result of stimulating, well-designed and purposeful activities in many subjects.

Most lessons have a good degree of pace and challenge, but teachers in a few classes provide too few opportunities for pupils to participate actively in the lesson. Teachers generally provide good opportunities to extend more able pupils, but do not adapt tasks as well for less able pupils. In the few lessons where the quality of teaching is adequate, the shortcomings relate mainly to slow pace, and lack of stimulus and challenge in the lessons.

Teachers know their pupils very well and monitor their progress carefully. They analyse performance data thoroughly to gauge the progress pupils are making and the value the school adds to their achievement. The school uses regular, on-going assessment by teachers and a range of standardised tests to support this analysis. Staff track pupils' performance well and pick up issues at an early stage.

While the school analyses the performance of individuals, year groups and the relative performance of boys and girls well, it does not track the progress of new entrants to the school in Year 7 as a group to check that they make suitable progress.

The quality of marking is generally good in the preparatory school. It is often good in the senior school but in a few cases, marking is more cursory, and teachers do not identify clearly enough how learners can improve their work or set individual, subject-specific targets. Overall, there is good use of self-assessment in classes across the school.

Annual and interim reports for parents are detailed and provide them with a lot of useful information on their child's progress. There are regular opportunities for parents to discuss the progress their child is making with class and subject teachers.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school provides a very high level of care. The well-focussed, individualised support offered to all pupils is an outstanding feature and promotes pupils' academic

achievement and enjoyment in learning very effectively. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to follow A level courses in mathematics and science subjects. A high proportion do so, attain excellent outcomes and move on to related courses in higher education.

The school works well with external agencies and specialist services to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. Learning experiences offer stimulating opportunities to promote learners' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The school produces a range of high-quality information for pupils and parents, for example information regarding options and career paths. This helps pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of education.

Provision across the school for personal and social education is comprehensive and includes an effective 'learning for life' programme in the sixth form. This focuses very effectively on the skills identified in the framework for social and emotional aspects of learning.

Induction arrangements and procedures to support transition between key stages help pupils to settle well. The very effective communication between tutors, heads of year and the pastoral team helps ensure extremely good support for pupils' wellbeing.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Whole-school assessment procedures identify pupils with additional learning needs effectively. There is good provision for pupils who are identified as more able and talented. A team of highly-qualified specialist teachers, working in the dyslexia department, provides excellent support for pupils with specific learning difficulties. Parents of pupils who receive targeted support for dyslexia are kept very well informed and are fully involved with their child's education. However, the tracking of, and support for, pupils with other additional learning needs is less evident.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school promotes a friendly community spirit, embracing diversity and equality very well throughout all sections of the school. A strong sense of mutual respect between pupils and staff, and with their peers permeates the school. There are well-established and appropriate equality and diversity policies and procedures.

The physical and learning environment supports pupils' cultural, social and moral development effectively. There are systematic programmes to explore cultural differences and a strong emphasis on promoting tolerance and understanding across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to develop self-confidence and independence within a safe environment. The layout of the premises allows for good pupil interaction across the age range and they move easily and sensibly around the school site.

The well-maintained buildings and grounds, spacious classrooms and specialist teaching areas provide an excellent learning environment. This is enhanced by attractive displays throughout the school and the high-quality learning resources.

Pupils in the Foundation Phase have good opportunities for outdoor learning both within their own play areas and in the attractive grounds and woodland area.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Excellent
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Leadership: Excellent

The headteacher, senior staff and governors are successful in promoting a shared vision for the school based on the motto 'A school for life'.

The headteacher and senior management team provide clear leadership and have very high expectations. This contributes to an excellent whole-school ethos providing a very supportive environment for pupils with a clear focus on high achievement. These expectations and supportive environment are reflected in the excellent outcomes.

The recently-reviewed management structures support school improvement successfully. An effective model of distributed leadership gives staff ownership of developments and improvements in their particular areas of school life. There is a very clear structure of management meetings. These are well organised and, together with clear lines of communication and effective team working, lead to the very smooth running of the school at all levels.

Staff have specific job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities well. The thorough, efficient and fit-for-purpose performance-management system includes regular lesson observations. It ensures staff accountability and supports staff in enhancing their subject expertise and identifying relevant areas for development. Any instances of underperformance are tackled appropriately.

Under the leadership of a very active and long serving chairperson, the governing body supports the school conscientiously. There are very strong links between school leaders and governors. Governors know the school very well. They know about the performance of the pupils, the strengths of the school and the areas that need further development. Governors scrutinise the school's finances carefully. They challenge the school very effectively, act as critical friends when appropriate to do so and hold the school to account for standards and quality. This has a very positive impact on the school's work and the way leaders and managers undertake their roles.

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

Improving quality: Excellent

There are rigorous and very effective self-evaluation arrangements that draw on a range of first-hand evidence. This evidence includes detailed analysis of pupils' performance, extensive lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the views of pupils, parents and governors.

Robust subject audits, which include a thorough analysis of pupils' outcomes, provide a clear focus on standards and enable the school to target pupils' progress effectively. Consultation with pupils is a particularly strong aspect of the school's self-evaluation process. Pupils feel that their views are regularly sought, listened to and taken seriously. Opportunities for parents to make their views known are enhanced by the planned 'drop-in' sessions being held on Saturday mornings. The school also takes account of the views of governors through a formal consultation process.

The outcomes of the school's self-evaluation are used to determine appropriate areas for school improvement. These are contained in a very detailed school improvement plan. This plan identifies an extensive number of improvements for the current and the forthcoming year and staff are clearly aware of the key priorities.

Although the improvement plan does not indicate how the school will measure the success of all initiatives, its implementation is having a very positive impact and the school has a very good track record of making improvements in standards and provision. High performance outcomes, extensive improvements to the school's accommodation, the successful revision of the management structure and the amalgamation of the infant and junior departments reflect a sustained focus on school improvement. In addition, the school has made very good progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection.

There is a strong culture of teamwork throughout the school and this, together with good support for teachers' continuous professional development, contributes to the development of a strong learning community.

Partnership working: Good

The school has well-established links with external organisations and other partners that impact positively on pupils' wellbeing and provide useful educational opportunities. Almost all parents are very supportive of the school.

The school has strong partnerships with other independent schools within South East Wales. Through these links, staff have good opportunities to attend training programmes that impact on teaching and learning. Staff in the preparatory school attend a range of courses provided by the local authority education department and also visit local primary schools. There is a culture of promoting good practice within the school.

Pupils are encouraged to develop independence and responsibility through a variety of work-experience opportunities and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Partnerships with local business and educational establishments, such as Cardiff University, have had a positive impact on increasing pupils' awareness of the career options available to them. These partnerships include contact with a local engineering firm that has had a positive influence on pupils' university course choices. Pupils have also benefited from the input of a range of specialist medical contacts to the personal and social education programme.

Resource management: Excellent

The school manages its resources particularly well to ensure they provide maximum benefits for the pupils. All senior managers have a clear understanding of the school's budgetary position and its priorities for improvement. Senior managers are well informed about the costs of all programmes and plan expenditure prudently. Examples of this include the recent development of the well-equipped science laboratories that meet the needs of the increasing numbers of learners studying A level science subjects particularly well. The recent staff restructuring has reduced the number of management posts while maintaining a strong focus on school improvement priorities.

The school manages its staff very well. All teachers are highly qualified and appropriately experienced. It has an effective staff appraisal and performance management system that it uses well to identify any staff training needs. It then ensures that these needs are met in a timely manner.

The school makes excellent use of its resources to achieve outstanding outcomes for pupils and provides value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty-eight parents responded to the questionnaire. Overall, their responses are very positive. All of them agree, and many strongly agree, that their child is safe in school and that staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Almost all parents agree that they are satisfied with the school, that their child likes school, that teaching is good and that pupils behave well. Most parents agree that their child was helped to settle into the school and is making good progress. Most parents also agree that the staff treat all children fairly and with respect, that the school provides a good range of activities, encourages pupils to be healthy and feel comfortable approaching the school with any problems. Most parents feel that the school is well run, that homework builds appropriately on their child's learning, that school encourages them to take on responsibility and prepares pupils well for the next stage in learning. A few parents do not feel the school informs them well about their child's progress and do not understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. A very few parents do not agree that their child receives appropriate additional support.

Responses to pupils' questionnaires

A total of 144 pupils completed the questionnaire. Of these, 35 pupils are in key stage 2 in the preparatory school and 109 pupils are in the senior school, including 32 in the sixth form. The number of responses from boys and girls was almost equal.

All pupils who responded agree that they feel safe in school.

In the preparatory school, all pupils feel that they are doing well, agree that staff help them to learn and make progress, and know who to ask for help when they need it. Most of these pupils think that the school deals well with any bullying, know who to talk to if they are worried or upset and agree that nearly all pupils behave well at playtime and lunchtime. Most pupils also agree that they have enough resources to do their work, that homework helps them and that the school teaches them how to be healthy. A few pupils say that they do not have enough chances for regular exercise and that other children do not behave well so they can get their work done.

In the senior school, all pupils agree that teachers help them to learn and make progress, and just over half of them strongly agree. Nearly all pupils agree that they are doing well at school, that they have enough resources for their work, that staff respect them and their backgrounds, and there are plenty of opportunities for them to get regular exercise. Most senior school pupils agree that the school deals well with any bullying, that they have someone to talk to if they are worried and pupils behave well. Most of them also agree that they are encouraged to take responsibility and are helped to be ready for their next stage of learning. A few pupils do not agree that homework helps them to improve, that the school encourages them to be healthy or listens to their views. There is little difference in the views of boys and girls. Overall, pupils in the sixth form responded more positively than pupils in key stage 4, and agreed with most statements.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Rosemary Lait	Reporting Inspector
Mike Maguire	Team Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector
Penny Lewis	Team Inspector
Barry Norris	Team Inspector
Meinir Rees	Team Inspector
Andrea Cashell	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003: 3 and 5
Rob Carnevale	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

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.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11