

School inspection report

23 to 25 September 2025

Ryde School with Upper Chine

Queen's Road

Ryde

Isle of Wight

PO33 3BE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have a clear understanding of the needs of the pupils who make up the diverse school community. They successfully promote the wellbeing of pupils in line with school's aims. Leaders provide effective pastoral care for pupils through the implementation of a range of initiatives to support them. Governors are well informed and supportive; they provide appropriate challenge and maintain effective oversight to ensure that leaders meet the Standards consistently.
2. The curriculum is wide-ranging and provides a number of educational pathways for pupils as they progress through the school, including academic and vocational options. The curriculum is well designed for the aptitudes and interests of pupils. It makes effective use of the school's island setting and is enhanced by a varied programme of co-curricular activities and competitions. Leaders monitor pupils' performance systematically to identify when additional support and challenge is needed. Positive relationships with teachers and regular feedback help pupils to make progress. However, in some lessons, teaching does not provide sufficient challenge or support, so pupils do not make as much progress as possible.
3. Leaders promote a culture of mutual respect and pupils behave well. An effective strategy is in place to prevent bullying. Pupils' emotional and mental health is supported by caring staff. Through an effective personal development curriculum and the many opportunities given to participate in and contribute to school life, pupils develop their maturity, confidence and self-belief. Pupils put into practice the values that they learn. A suitable and relevant relationships and sex education (RSE) programme contributes positively to pupils' personal development.
4. Pupils are confident about their futures and prepared effectively for life beyond school. They are self-aware and make considered choices, helped by well-planned careers education as they get older. Leaders have established links locally so that pupils learn the importance of contributing to the local community. Pupils develop a global outlook as part of a diverse community and through supporting international charity projects and taking part in trips overseas.
5. Leaders ensure that boarders are supported to thrive academically and personally in the friendly and well-organised boarding community. Boarders settle quickly into the welcoming and supportive boarding houses, helped by a thorough induction programme when they join and a range of interesting evening and weekend activities. Boarders who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported in improving their English skills through the positive relationships that are fostered within the boarding community.
6. The early years setting is well led and managed by caring staff who provide a range of enjoyable activities for the children. They promote children's social and emotional development effectively within a homely setting. Children acquire secure communication and language skills and use vocabulary precisely in response to high-quality interactions with staff throughout the day.
7. Leaders maintain a systematic and suitable approach to health and safety and risk management in school. Measures to identify and mitigate risk are suitably implemented and reviewed. However, some risk assessments are not sufficiently detailed.
8. Leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to stay safe, including online. Governors review safeguarding practices and leaders ensure staff understand the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Leaders work

closely with external agencies, including the local authority. These relationships are well established and ensure that pupils receive timely support.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen teaching so that lessons consistently challenge and support all pupils to make good progress
- ensure the risk assessment policy is implemented consistently so that written risk assessments are similarly detailed across all areas of the school's provision.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders and governors demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting pupils' wellbeing through a coherent set of policies and procedures. These are well understood by staff and pupils and implemented effectively. Leaders ensure that staff and pupils understand the importance of mutual respect and maintain a supportive culture in which they listen to pupils' views. As a result, pupils are reflective and willing to take on responsibility. They contribute meaningfully to the school community, playing their part in promoting the school's aims and values.
10. The governing body maintains effective oversight, including through regular discussions with leaders and informal school visits. Governors assure themselves that leaders have the knowledge and skills they need to ensure the school meets the Standards consistently. Leaders are reflective. They conduct comprehensive self-evaluation to formulate a detailed strategic plan for school development. They use this to identify improvements to provision, such as the updated whole-school personal development programme and the new careers education programme.
11. Boarding provision is led and managed by well-trained and suitably experienced staff who ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place. Boarders are well supervised to support their independent study and in recreation time. Leaders draw up effective risk assessments for the boarding houses, medical care and activities. Staff in the boarding houses are alert to potential risks and encourage both international and part-time boarders to feel at home in the boarding houses.
12. Parents receive detailed annual reports about their child's progress, attitudes and attainment. These are complemented in the senior school by reports on pupils' personal development and contribution to school life. Parents have opportunities to discuss their child's progress with teachers. All required information for parents is on the school's website and updated in line with statutory guidance.
13. Parents of children in the early years receive informative written annual reports that demonstrate the progress their child has made towards the early learning goals. Staff are suitably qualified, including in paediatric first aid and food handling. Leaders report progress at the end of Reception to the local authority, as required.
14. Knowledgeable leaders have developed a comprehensive risk management plan. They are vigilant about the contextual risks of being an island school, as well as identifying potential risks across all areas of school life. Suitable control measures are in place to mitigate identified risks and these are monitored and reviewed regularly by governors. Risk management typically includes detailed written risk assessments; however, these are not always recorded in sufficient detail across some aspects of the provision, resulting in some inconsistency in the implementation of the policy.
15. A suitable three-stage complaints policy is in place, which leaders implement effectively, operating within the published timescales. The school keeps detailed records of complaints when they occur, including any actions leaders take as a result.
16. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to promote pupils' welfare, including reporting to the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. Leaders ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in promoting inclusion and the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010. A suitable accessibility plan is in place to improve access to buildings and the curriculum.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders provide a varied and engaging curriculum that considers pupils' aptitudes and ages and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Sixth-form pupils select from a range of pathways, including A levels with additional enrichment opportunities, and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme or the IB Careers-related Programme. Leaders support pupils to choose courses that take into account their interests and prior attainment. At GCSE level, pupils choose from a broad range of options, including BTEC Level 2 courses and the Arts Award in addition to GCSE subjects. Pupils' good progress is evident in their GCSE, IB and A-level results.
19. The ambitious curriculum for modern foreign languages in Year 7 introduces pupils to four different languages in rotation. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to help pupils develop their linguistic skills, equipping them with the knowledge they need to make informed choices about which two languages to continue as they move through the senior school. Pupils develop their artistic and aesthetic skills well through teaching that encourages individuality and makes effective use of stimulating resources. Pupils are confident and adept performers because teachers encourage them to develop their practical skills in drama and music lessons and provide opportunities to perform in events and productions. Pupils use technology effectively in lessons to support their learning and develop secure research skills when they are given independent work.
20. Heads of department devise detailed, age-appropriate schemes of work. Knowledgeable teachers typically plan well-structured and enjoyable lessons that provide clear explanations and allow pupils to build on their prior learning. Pupils receive helpful feedback from teachers and evaluate their own progress, identifying what they have done well and how they can improve. Older pupils actively engage with subject clinics provided, which support them in building their subject knowledge and examination skills.
21. In English lessons, effective teaching helps pupils to become confident and thoughtful readers who are able to interpret texts and cite evidence to support their point of view. In mathematics lessons, pupils are supported to develop their skills through the provision of well-chosen tasks that escalate in difficulty. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of scientific theory which they apply successfully in their practical lessons.
22. Leaders implement an assessment framework of formal testing and teacher assessment. They undertake an annual review of examination results to analyse attainment and identify trends to support future planning. Subject and section leaders use assessment data to track and monitor pupils' attainment, using their findings to identify strategies to enhance pupils' progress. They use assessments to identify pupils with higher prior attainment; however, teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge in lessons. Consequently, in some lessons the work does not provide an appropriate level of demand and as a result pupils do not make as much progress as possible.
23. Prep school leaders implement a skills-based curriculum that is topic based. Through this 'discovery' curriculum, pupils develop the ability to think scientifically and learn effectively about history, geography and culture. The prep school mathematics curriculum follows the national curriculum and is organised so that pupils develop their skills coherently over time. English lessons support pupils to develop writing skills from a young age and to improve their work by responding to feedback and redrafting. Pupils' reading skills develop effectively through an integrated approach to phonics in the early years and pre-prep.

24. Supportive staff in the early years understand children's needs and interests, using these to create opportunities for them to explore and enjoy learning. As a result, children develop their skills effectively across all areas of learning. Children's communication skills develop well, so that they express their curiosity and enthusiasm fluently when playing. They use language accurately, such as when talking about size and shape when modelling with clay or in role play in the home corner. By the end of Reception, children meet the early learning goals and are well prepared for moving into Year 1.
25. Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified promptly. In the early years, specialists work with families to support speech and language development when needed. Pupils who have SEND receive specialist support in small groups as they move through the school. Teachers receive information about strategies to support individual pupils' needs. When these approaches are used well, pupils make good progress because support is appropriate. However, pupils make less progress in some lessons when the strategies designed to support them are not implemented in class.
26. Pupils who speak EAL make rapid progress with their English skills because they are in an environment that encourages them to speak in English throughout the day. Leaders provide timetabled EAL lessons from Year 9 and use regular assessments to monitor progress and to identify if any additional support is needed. Pupils make effective use of digital devices when they need help to understand subject-specific language, which helps them to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.
27. Pupils participate in a varied programme of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities after school, which provides recreational opportunities for day pupils and boarders. Activities reflect pupils' interests, including silversmithing and cryptic crosswords, art and beekeeping. Children in the early years and prep school have the option of wraparound care before and after school in a welcoming environment.
28. There is a daily programme of house activities for boarders in which all boarders participate. These include opportunities such as recreational sports, baking or arts and crafts, as well as activities initiated and planned by older boarders for their peers. House staff supervise independent study time after supper for younger boarders to help them use their time effectively.

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

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

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

30. Leaders implement effective pastoral systems that support pupils' wellbeing. Staff help pupils to develop a sense of their wellbeing and understand how to live healthy lives. Pupils understand the value of the range of initiatives provided to support them, such as the wellbeing centre, mentors and peer listeners.
31. Pupils are self-aware and articulate their opinions capably. They recognise the importance of positive relationships with teachers who know them well in developing their self-confidence. Leaders encourage pupils to reflect on both their school work and their personal contribution to community life. As a result, they are thoughtful and insightful about the difference they can make to the community.
32. Boarders are provided with a thorough induction on arrival, including those who join after the start of the year or for a short stay. Leaders ensure there is effective communication with guardians and parents, maintaining a close partnership between school and home. Boarders easily access the medical centre and receive support from local services, including for mental health, if required.
33. Pupils behave well and show mutual trust and respect. This is promoted by a curriculum that ensures pupils understand the impact of attitudes, words and actions on others. Pupils are respectful of differences and understand the importance of treating people equally.
34. Leaders ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently and that pupils understand the rationale behind it. Pupils value the rewards they are given for positive behaviour and recognise the need for sanctions. There is an effective anti-bullying strategy in place. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and reflect with insight on the impact their behaviour has on others. As a result, there are very few incidents of bullying. Leaders analyse behaviour logs regularly and are alert to potential patterns or trends, taking appropriate action when required.
35. Leaders provide a thorough personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, which is planned well to meet the needs of pupils across the school. Experienced and trained staff deliver the core teaching, which is then developed by teachers in form and class time. The curriculum explores important topics including discrimination, healthy lifestyles, online safety, drugs and consent. Pupils' understanding is assessed through classroom discussion and quizzes.
36. The well-designed RSE curriculum helps pupils to learn about healthy relationships and to develop the attributes they need to build and maintain positive relationships and friendships. In the early years, children demonstrate a good understanding of what makes a family. Older pupils are taught to consider what makes a healthy relationship and how to care for their mental and emotional health. Parents are consulted and kept well informed about the content of the curriculum and any changes that are made.
37. Children in the early years are helped by experienced and caring teachers to manage their emotions and talk about their feelings in a calm and nurturing environment during daily circle time. Leaders provide older pupils with opportunities to reflect in inclusive and welcoming chapel services. Pupils understand the contribution religion makes to an individual's life and show tolerance to those with

different beliefs, helped by effective personal development and religion, philosophy and theology programmes.

38. Leaders provide frequent opportunities to hear from older pupils using a 'you said, we listened' approach. Consequently, pupils share ideas and opinions confidently in councils, discussion groups and surveys. There is an 'open door' policy in boarding and boarders are encouraged to bring forward their suggestions to house staff or to the head of boarding.
39. Pupils develop their physical skills through a wide-ranging physical education (PE) and games curriculum. Teaching helps pupils to develop technical skills through clear instruction and modelling from teachers, such as dribbling in basketball and rugby game play. Children in the early years develop their physical skills through regular rambles along with outdoor play, PE and dance lessons. Older pupils have a well-planned PE curriculum with a focus on a main sport each term, such as rugby and netball, as well as a range of other activities, such as badminton and sailing, that develop skills. There is a busy fixtures schedule in the prep and senior schools through which pupils gain confidence, often playing competitively against teams from the mainland. Pupils participate in a wide variety of co-curricular opportunities to support their physical wellbeing and which reflect their interests, including a programme for sports scholars.
40. Prefects in boarding contribute to the welcoming and sociable atmosphere in the boarding houses. They help new boarders to settle in quickly and represent the views of boarders to school leaders. Prefects help to plan the programme of house activities and trips and act as well-respected role models to their younger peers.
41. Boarding houses are well maintained and comfortable. Boarders personalise their individual spaces and have welcoming, well-equipped communal areas in which to socialise and prepare snacks. Boarders have a thorough induction into boarding and understand the health and safety arrangements in place for them.
42. Leaders have established well-considered systems to ensure the health and safety of the premises and the supervision of pupils. Supervision in the early years is robust, with high staffing levels that ensure children are effectively supervised, including when resting. Adults in the early years ensure that safer eating arrangements are in place in line with statutory guidance.
43. Leaders implement comprehensive health and safety policies and monitor records and logs effectively. Provision and training for first aid is suitable, including in the early years where all members of staff have paediatric first aid training. Suitable fire safety procedures are followed appropriately, including regular fire drills during the school day and in boarding time.
44. Admission and attendance registers are kept in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance and work effectively with outside agencies when there are concerns.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

45. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

46. Leaders actively promote British values across the curriculum. As a result, pupils of all ages demonstrate the school's values of mutual respect and collective responsibility as members of the school community. Staff encourage pupils to take a pride in their school and its unique location. Leaders support pupils in identifying the ways in which they can contribute to the local community, such as through donations to foodbanks, visits to a care home and participation in musical events.
47. Pupils learn about the importance of charitable giving and the principle of service through fundraising for local and global causes. Older pupils seek opportunities to volunteer as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and Combined Cadet Force (CCF).
48. Pupils develop a sound understanding of right and wrong from an early age because leaders and pastoral staff actively encourage them to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others. Leaders support pupils to learn from their mistakes and put things right where they need to. As a result, there are very few instances of poor behaviour.
49. Pupils develop their social skills from a young age. In the early years, adults help children to take turns in conversations and to play co-operatively together, such as when building towers and playing card games. Circle time helps children learn to listen to others and contribute their ideas. Older pupils form positive friendships across year groups because they are given opportunities to work together.
50. Boarders quickly settle into a supportive boarding community where friendships thrive. Leaders are sensitive to the individual needs and cultural backgrounds of international boarders. Mixed boarding houses contribute to an inclusive environment in which boarders feel comfortable to be themselves and which prepares them well for their future lives.
51. Pupils are prepared effectively for life beyond school through a well-planned personal development programme. Pupils understand why rules are important and how government operates. They learn about the democratic process through elections for heads of house and opportunities to share their views, such as in surveys and on the school council. Members of the whole-school council, led by a sixth-form prefect, act as role models to younger pupils, who aspire to be like their senior peers.
52. Children in the early years understand that money can be used to help people through the opportunities they have to take part in charity days with the rest of the school. Teachers help pupils in the prep school to develop confidence in solving money questions in mathematics lessons. In the senior school, pupils' economic awareness is developed through the curriculum, such as when learning about the Winter of Discontent and recent examples of economic depression. Leaders listen to pupils' questions about money management and adjust the curriculum to ensure they have the information they need. This has led to the addition of topics such as mortgages and house buying in Year 9. Pupils are given opportunities to show entrepreneurial skill through enterprise challenges where they learn to grow an investment.
53. Leaders help pupils to understand how they can make a positive contribution to the wider world through activities in and outside lessons. Pupils in the prep school learn about global concerns such as the importance of recycling and environmental threats to African wildlife. Senior school pupils

benefit from the 'creativity, activity, service and enrichment (CASE)' programme, where they complete projects, such as on climate change, and participate in town hall community projects that improve the local environment.

54. The curriculum helps pupils at all stages to develop a mature understanding of other cultures and ways of life. Knowledgeable staff teach pupils about French and Chinese cultures in modern languages lessons. Pupils show sensitivity and respect when they explore related topics in the performing arts and discuss culturally diverse texts in English lessons. Leaders encourage pupils to share and celebrate their diverse individual cultures and to develop an appreciation for British culture and traditions. As a result, pupils gain an appreciation and understanding of the different customs of those within their school community and the wider world.
55. Prefects fulfil their individual responsibilities effectively whilst also working together as a team across the school. Prefects and house leaders in both the prep and senior schools take their roles seriously and are respected by their peers. Senior prefects develop their future skills through a robust selection process and regular opportunities to meet with school leaders and governors to discuss their responsibilities. These range from promoting the needs of boarders to managing chapel services and fundraising events.
56. Leaders provide a personalised and relevant careers education programme. The annual whole-school careers fair and monthly talks give pupils useful information about possible future paths. This is supported by individual discussions for older pupils and a 'futures day' in the sixth form. Pupils are well supported to make informed decisions about their future lives.

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

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

Safeguarding

58. Leaders maintain effective systems to ensure that safeguarding concerns throughout the school are identified and responded to promptly, in line with statutory guidance. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibility receive regular training so that they are well equipped for their roles. Governors undergo suitable training to ensure they understand their responsibilities.
59. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities are active in working with safeguarding partners and the police, as required. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) attends and contributes to the local safeguarding partnership and is well informed about the local context and procedures.
60. Staff receive regular well-planned safeguarding training in all aspects of safeguarding and know how to identify different types of abuse and risks such as radicalisation and misinformation. Leaders provide frequent updates and reinforce the importance of ongoing vigilance through a monthly safeguarding podcast and regular bulletins.
61. Leaders promote an open culture in which concerns are shared. The staff code of conduct and low-level concerns policy clearly set out for staff that any concerns about the conduct of adults in the school should be shared with the headteacher. Staff have a secure understanding of how to recognise and report any concerns, including self-referrals, using the school's reporting system.
62. Staff are alert to signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm, reporting such concerns swiftly within the effective reporting system. Leaders take appropriate action in response to concerns. They maintain detailed records which they use to identify trends and patterns, working collaboratively with external agencies to promote pupils' safeguarding.
63. Governors are active in maintaining effective oversight of safeguarding through regular meetings with the safeguarding team to review logs and records, and school visits to speak to staff and pupils. Governors conduct an annual review of safeguarding arrangements and receive detailed termly reports from the DSL.
64. Pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, including online. Personal development lessons include specific guidance on online safety. Pupils talk confidently about how to manage their digital footprint responsibly and how to block sites or report concerns. Pupils know what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns, including speaking to pastoral and wellbeing staff, using the 'worry boxes' or raising a concern anonymously.
65. Leaders with responsibility for boarding are successful in promoting a culture of safeguarding. Boarders know how to raise a concern with boarding and wellbeing staff or anonymously. Posters around the boarding houses provide contact details for the independent person who is available for boarders to talk to. Staff ensure boarders understand the local area by taking them around the island as part of the induction programme. This helps them to understand how to keep themselves safe in a new setting.
66. The school has suitable filtering and monitoring systems in place. These systems are tested regularly and leaders act promptly to respond to any concerns raised, including in boarding. Leaders have appropriate procedures in place to monitor the use of personal devices in school.

67. Leaders implement rigorous safer recruitment processes. They record the checks undertaken accurately in a single central record of appointments (SCR). Personnel files are well organised and checked systematically to ensure they contain the required documentation.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

68. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Ryde School with Upper Chine
Department for Education number	921/6002
Registered charity number	307409
Address	Ryde School with Upper Chine Queen's Road Ryde Isle of Wight PO33 3BE
Phone number	01983 562229
Email address	school.office@rydeschool.net
Website	rydeschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Ryde School Board of Governors
Chair	Chantal-Aimée Doerries KC
Headteacher	Mr William Turner
Age range	2 to 19
Number of pupils	671
Number of boarding pupils	55
Date of previous inspection	10 to 13 May 2022

Information about the school

69. Ryde School with Upper Chine is an independent co-educational day and boarding school, situated on the Isle of Wight. It is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The school has two sections. The prep school includes Nursery for pupils aged two to four years; pre-prep for pupils from Reception to Year 2 and prep for pupils from Years 3 to 6. The senior school, including sixth form, is for pupils aged 11 to 19 years.
70. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed in September 2022. A new chair of governors was appointed in January 2025.
71. There are two mixed boarding houses on the school site. One is for pupils in Years 7 to 10 and the other for pupils in Years 11 to 13.
72. There are 48 pupils in the early years, comprising two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
73. The school has identified 187 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
74. The school has identified 73 pupils as having English as an additional language.
75. The school states its aims are to be an 'island school with a global outlook', where pupils develop a love of learning and an ability to think independently. It seeks to encourage pupils to be reflective and to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and personal wellbeing. The school strives to nurture in pupils its four core values of ambition, responsibility, courage and respect in line with its motto 'that I may serve'.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 23 to 25 September 2025

76. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

77. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the wellbeing area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

78. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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For more information, please visit isi.net