



ISEB
Independent Schools
Examinations Board

CASE STUDY

iPQ AT ROSE HILL SCHOOL: EXPLORING PERSONAL ABILITIES

“The iPQ enables children to set their own goals, understand success criteria, and all of the other essential skills that you don’t want to leave until they’re in the job market. It really moulds them to appreciate the work of other pupils, look a bit broader, and have a go at something different.”

Emma Neville, Head, Rose Hill School

WHAT IS THE iPQ?

The iPQ is a research-based project qualification that is carefully constructed to teach and assess essential independent learning skills for Years 5-8. It is divided into five sections: Define, Research and Review, Discuss and Develop, Reflect and Present.

HOW IS THE iPQ USED AT ROSE HILL SCHOOL?

After adopting the iPQ in 2021, Rose Hill School offers the qualification to Year 8, with Years 3-5 completing preparatory, unassessed projects (followed by a review in Year 7) that will lay a strong foundation in planning, methodology, question development, and meeting success criteria. The school builds a two-hour ‘enrichment session’ into the Friday afternoon timetable, which children will use to develop and complete their projects throughout the year.

Emma Neville, Head at Rose Hill School, was searching for a thematic, project-based activity for her pupils that would extend beyond the curriculum and represent a balance between knowledge acquisition and application. Upon finding the iPQ, Emma felt that it allowed for “exploration and adventure”.

The iPQ is introduced to the pupils in September, and in early sessions, they are asked to think about the subject they might want to tackle for the project. The time is also used for presentations from guest speakers, including a ventriloquist, a gemologist, and employees from NASA and cyber security firms, in an effort to both stimulate and inspire the pupils. “We didn’t just want to introduce them to doctors, teachers and lawyers,” says Emma.



Emma Neville, Head at Rose Hill School

With the future firmly in mind, Emma explains that looking at potential careers the children might work in was essential when considering the benefits of the iPQ. “Whatever company you work for, and wherever you sit within it, it’s nearly all project-based work, and you’re going to have to feedback or present in some way, and we wanted to give these children their first experience of that.”

After Common Entrance (CE) exams are over, the iPQ steps up a gear for Rose Hill School pupils. However, Emma stresses the importance of planting seeds early and not leaving the entire project until this time so that students can extract the most value from the process.





One pupil, a competitive swimmer, used the project as an opportunity to develop his skills, making a 12-minute video entitled 'How does mindset affect swimming performance?' with a project goal of developing a growth mindset and trialling for the under 16s Welsh national squad. Within the project, his coach would give feedback on his technique, and he would repeatedly return to the pool to improve his performance.

“The best projects were the ones where you can see their personality,” says Emma. “[His] stood out as phenomenal as he was constantly reflecting. Talking about yourself in front of others can be tough, but he was passionate and philosophical about his self-improvement and took us all on that journey with him.” His outcomes speak for themselves: he received a distinction on the project and also made the Welsh team.

Emma adds that all of the projects were impressive regardless of the final mark: “When looking at the profile of pupils who have completed the qualification, it’s so incredible to see what they’ve all achieved.” However, Emma stresses the importance of letting children choose the project title for themselves to achieve outstanding results, going on to describe how one of her pupils was swayed by a parent to change their topic, and it was evident from the outset that they were not interested in it, ultimately affecting project enjoyment and the final result.

From experience, Emma explains that spending a significant portion of the project time on research skills is key for success with projects: “Children need to understand how to organise their thinking and learn to critically evaluate their ideas to produce a successful project”.

The iPQ allows children to focus on the learning journey and understand the importance of developing ideas rather than just focusing on the end goal, which Emma sees as critical for them as they move forward to the next stage of their education and into life beyond. Emma extols the benefits of the iPQ for prep school pupils and urges others to investigate its potential for their students. She knows they will not regret it.

For information on how to get started, visit: www.iseb.co.uk/iPQ

For the Rose Hill School website, visit: www.rosehillschool.co.uk

To read about the success of the iPQ at The Banda School, Kenya visit: [iPQ Banda](#)

WHY CHOOSE THE iPQ?

“The iPQ is an excellent way of getting children to develop and showcase their skills,” says Emma. “The result is so tangible that it allows them to investigate something they really enjoy. When you choose your degree, you’re choosing something you want to learn, and being able to do that as a 12-year-old is amazing.”

Emma explains that the iPQ fits in perfectly with Rose Hill School’s ethos and curriculum, entitled COMPASS, in encouraging children to develop their natural abilities. “Whether they are good with words, good with people, or artistic, the iPQ nurtures their development,” says Emma.

Many of the Year 8 pupils in the most recent iPQ cohort selected projects with an aspect of personal development or used it as an opportunity to explore their capabilities in previously uncharted waters. Project titles included: ‘Can I create a piece of jazz choreography and teach it to Year 2 pupils?’, ‘Can I learn how to make an axe?’, ‘Can I learn how to backflip in 10 days?’, and ‘Can I coach Year 3 children to beat Year 4 children in netball?’

