



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

The Peterborough School

November 2019



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School's Details

School	The Peterborough School			
DfE number	874/6000			
Early Years registration number	EY285914			
Registered charity number	269667			
Address	The Peterborough School Thorpe road Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE3 6AP			
Telephone number	01733 343357			
Email address	office@tpschr.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Adrian Meadows			
Chair of governors	Ms Lynne Ayres			
Age range	0 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	503			
	EYFS	101	Preparatory	158
	Seniors	190	Sixth Form	54
Inspection dates	13 to 14 November 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Peterborough School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged 0 to 18. It was founded in 1895 for the education of girls and moved to its present site in 1936, becoming fully coeducational in 2010. The school was incorporated into the Woodard Foundation in 1974 and became a charitable trust in 1975. The school is managed by a board of governors, all of whom are Woodard Fellows.
- 1.2 The school operates a nursery, preparatory school and senior school on a shared 13-acre site. Since the previous inspection the school has developed a dedicated sixth-form study centre and a new library facility.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to unlock the potential of all pupils and to develop, nurture and achieve academic excellence, passion for learning, confidence, teamwork, creativity, leadership and spiritual and moral values in a stimulating learning environment. In line with the tenets of the Woodard Corporation, it offers an experience of Anglican worship.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, mostly from Peterborough and surrounding counties. Data provided by the school indicates that the ability of the pupils in the senior school is above average and that of pupils in the sixth form is broadly average compared with pupils taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 52 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 36 of whom receive additional specialist help. Two pupils have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 29 pupils, all of whom are fluent and require no further support. Data used by the school have identified 35 pupils as being most able in its population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 46 other pupils because of their special talents in music, drama, sport and art.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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 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 un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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 a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

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.

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 published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the preparatory school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2016 to 2018, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2016 to 2018 have been in line with the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.21 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.22 Leaders implement a highly inspiring curriculum that meets the relevant statutory requirements of the EYFS as well as the needs and interests of children, including those with SEND. The setting provides a very high standard of care and staff demonstrate a deep knowledge of how children learn at this stage. All children are very well supported so that their needs are very well met. Children make rapid progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the transition to the next stage in their education.
- 2.23 Children are very happy in the setting, separate easily from parents and engage in activities readily. Staff provide excellent support for the children's development giving quality time to each child to ensure they feel very safe, secure and happy. All requirements for the children's safeguarding and welfare have been met. There is a shared understanding of the responsibility for safeguarding so that every child is safe in the setting.
- 2.24 Leaders have acted on the recommendation of the last inspection. Staff have received training on how to use the different features of the online tracking system. It is now used very effectively to monitor the progress of different cohorts of children, so they can achieve the best outcomes. Strong leadership, with a clear vision for the future, ensures that the setting demonstrates highly evaluative practice and secures continuous improvement of children's life chances.

Quality of education

- 2.25 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 2.26 The curriculum is very well balanced, meets the relevant statutory requirements and the needs and interests of the children, enabling them to have an excellent start to their education. It provides many opportunities for children to increase their language and communication and their physical skills, supporting their personal, social and emotional development most effectively. Staff show that they have an excellent knowledge of how children at this age learn and develop. They plan in detail, inspiring activities to give each child high quality experiences to allow them to develop and learn. They know to give the children plenty of time to explore, be creative and to work independently before intervening. For example, a toddler built a ramp and was then asked what else he could do to make the cars go faster.
- 2.27 Staff readily engage with the children and place great emphasis on the development of language and social skills. They model language very well, regularly read stories, ask questions and sing songs to the children, who are encouraged to join in by repeating words and actions. Staff make excellent use of the opportunities when playing with the children, to increase their mathematical understanding, for example by counting the numbers of bricks on the floor.

2.28 Regular assessments recorded on the online tracker matched against the expected levels of development for their age, ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored, and their needs are very well met. Parents have access to the tracking system to see the progress that their child is making, what activities they have experienced, as well as being able to add their own comments about achievements at home. Records show, however, that not all parents have taken up the opportunity to provide examples of achievements for their children on a regular basis, which would provide a greater insight for staff to tailor appropriate activities based upon the children's abilities and build upon their learning experiences outside of the nursery. Leaders and staff are keen to encourage more parents to add significant achievements of their children at home to help inform staff planning and provide appropriate challenge to ensure the best progress for all. The highly stimulating experiences the children receive allow them to develop at pace and provides them with a solid foundation on which their futures may be built. They are very well prepared for their next stage in their education.

Behaviour and attitudes

2.29 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.

2.30 Children are very enthusiastic learners who are very keen to explore their surroundings and try out new things. They show high levels of engagement and settle quickly into the different activities provided. They are keen to "have a go" for themselves and will persevere until they manage to do something, such as posting shapes into a container or learning to link a toy train together. They enjoy exploring, particularly in the outside area and some children were seen having great fun creating mud cakes, using different shaped moulds. Children can use a spoon and fork to feed themselves and some can find and put on their shoes and coats, showing that they are developing their independence.

2.31 Children are able to maintain their focus on activities for appropriate amounts of time. Staff encourage children to play and be creative so that children can develop their own ideas. For example, children were exploring the texture of jelly and making shapes with it using their fingers. They show great pleasure and pride in what they can do, and staff give them an appropriate amount of praise when they achieve something. Children are encouraged to be inventive in their play and are able to choose what they want to play with, as many resources are readily accessible to them. Babies were observed crawling to find the shiny balls to play with and another chose to use saucepans as drums to make loud noises, grinning with delight as she made each new sound.

2.32 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show great respect for one another, often helping each other to fetch things and celebrating each other's successes with applause. They are encouraged to play together cooperatively and to share toys. They are reminded to do this by staff in a gentle manner. Staff often use facial gestures to help younger children understand how to manage their own feelings. Prompt and regular attendance at the setting is encouraged and procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences. The setting works very closely with parents and communicates most effectively with them to ensure that children do not miss activities and that attendance is in accordance with school procedures, ensuring that children form good habits for future learning.

Personal development

- 2.33 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 2.34 Highly effective care practices promote and support the children's emotional security and development of their character so that children feel extremely safe and happy in the school and can take advantage of everything that is on offer. Staff reassure and respond very effectively to their needs in a sensitive and caring manner. Parents are very complimentary about the exemplary standard of emotional support given to their child. The extremely warm and caring relationships between children and staff foster a very positive culture and a sense of belonging. Staff show that they really care and want the children to succeed. They encourage children to become resilient, confident and independent by the copious use of praise and by careful explanations if something does not go according to plan. Children are encouraged to take risks both indoors and in the outside area. They are keen to try to do more adventurous things, such as digging in the mud puddle or climbing up and down the slide unaided.
- 2.35 Physical and emotional health is given high priority. All staff are very quick to respond to their needs. Children know that they can seek reassurance from their key person at any time and they will frequently go straight to them on arrival at the setting. Parents reported that they feel extremely happy and confident about leaving their children in the setting, as all staff are very approachable and take great care to get to know each child in their care, very well. The setting makes excellent provision to encourage children to lead a healthy lifestyle and be physically active. The regular use of garden areas and wider school facilities allow children ample opportunities to play outside in all weathers and develop their gross motor skills. They are provided with nutritionally balanced meals and snack and can have water and milk when required.
- 2.36 High priority given to safeguarding, and rigorous implementation of all welfare policies and procedures ensure that children are kept very safe. Hygiene practices, which are followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of the children at this age are met appropriately. Very clean and modern facilities promote high standards of hygiene. Staff remind children to wash their hands before eating and support those unable to do it independently. The setting ensures that children do not have access to the internet unless supervised and there is a no mobile phone policy in operation in the EYFS. Children are also shown how to climb stairs properly and reminded that it is important to sit in a chair correctly for their own safety.
- 2.37 The setting prepares all the children for life in the United Kingdom through a very well embedded programme of cultural events, which celebrate diversity. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and learn to care for and respect others and the staff are excellent role models for them. All children are expected to show fairness, tolerance and kindness towards each other at all times.

Leadership and management

- 2.38 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 2.39 Leaders have a clear vision for the setting and ensure that staff provide high quality experiences and care for all children who attend the setting. Through a thorough process of self-evaluation, they are able to identify what they need to do to maintain and improve upon these high standards. Leaders have high expectations of what a child under two can achieve, as well as a very clear understanding about supporting all children so that they achieve the best outcomes. Leaders place great importance on staff development. A highly focused professional development programme is in place and this helps staff to continually improve their practice and implement new ideas into the curriculum. A very effective system of supervision ensures that staff are well supported and that their well-being and workload is always given due consideration.

- 2.40 Relationships between leaders, children, parents and the wider community are very strong including the setting's links with local outside statutory agencies for specialist help if it is required. Leaders know the children very well and are quick to respond to their needs. Parents trust the setting to provide consistently high standards of care and, in interviews, they reported that they feel very well informed about the progress their child is making and that they are encouraged to contribute to their child's assessments.
- 2.41 Governance is strong and works closely with leadership and management, by offering support and guidance to ensure welfare and safeguarding requirements are implemented effectively and that they are rigorously adhered to by all staff. Governors are extremely well informed about the practice and standards of the setting.
- 2.42 High priority is given to safeguarding and regular child protection update training is provided for staff to ensure that all children are kept safe and measures are maintained to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the Early Years.

- to further encourage the regular use of the online tracking system by all parents, so that staff can plan children's future learning more effectively to provide an appropriate but challenging learning environment which enables the best progress for all.

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 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 registration and chapel. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Geoffrey Marston	Reporting inspector
Mrs Tania Botting	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)