



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Parkside School

September 2022

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School's Details

School	Parkside School			
DfE number	936/6020			
Registered charity number	312041			
Address	Parkside School The Manor Stoke d'Abernon Cobham Surrey KT11 3PX			
Telephone number	01932 862749			
Email address	reception@parkside-school.co.uk			
Head	Ms Nicole Janssen			
Chair of governors	Mr Robin Southwell			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	250			
	Nursery	35	Pre-Prep	38
	Prep	177		
Inspection dates	21 to 23 September 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Parkside school is an independent day school registered as a single-sex school for male pupils aged between 4 and 13. The all-year-round Nursery for children aged 2 to 4 is co-educational. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection outdoor learning provision has been extended with a new woodland learning area as well as an additional science laboratory, food technology laboratory and refurbishment of the Pre-Prep building.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide opportunities for pupils to achieve their full potential through exciting, excellent and innovative teaching and learning within a happy, safe and nurturing environment. It seeks to enable pupils to develop inquisitive and enquiring minds, so they embrace challenge with confidence and develop the skills for their future paths. The aim is to nurture and develop pupils' passions and talents, with a focus on promoting respectful, fair, well-rounded and confident individuals.

About the pupils

- 1.3 The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average compared with those taking the same tests nationally. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 30 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include a range of specific learning difficulties. English is an additional language (EAL) for 10 pupils, none of whom required additional support. Data used by the school have identified pupils who are the most able in the school's population. Their needs, and those of pupils with particular talents in sport, drama, music or art, are met by the flexible use of setting and additional extra-curricular enrichment activities.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection 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. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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 standards 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, and relevant 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 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 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.

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- The overall achievement of the pupils is excellent and fulfils the school's aims.
 - Pupils acquire excellent knowledge and understanding throughout the curriculum as a result of well-paced, dynamic teaching.
 - Pupils' skills for learning are well-developed and contribute strongly to their progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
 - Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning which they apply to their many extra-curricular successes.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils, including those with SEND, develop excellent self-understanding, knowing their strengths and what they need to do to address any individual problems.
 - Pupils display outstanding social skills and collaborate extremely productively.
 - Pupils have a notably strong sense of right and wrong; their behaviour is excellent and they reflect the school's aims.
 - Pupils value and delight in each other's cultural backgrounds.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:
- Enable pupils to develop their investigative skills and individual creativity through increased opportunities to engage in cross-curricular assignments.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The overall achievement of the pupils is excellent and represents successful fulfilment of the school's aims. Evidence from tests used by the school confirms that the pupils consistently attain well in relation to the abilities of others taking the same tests, and that most make rapid progress. Senior leaders analyse the results of these tests, along with internal assessments, to quickly identify any pupils who require either long- or short-term support. Pupils with SEND make similar rates of progress to their peers due to well-targeted support in class. In the prep school, their individual learning needs

are also met through flexible setting which enables different groups of pupils to cover the same topic in a way appropriate to their ability and needs. Pupils may also participate in booster groups which further support their progress and attainment. In the EYFS, many children who enter with a broad range of starting points, reach the expected levels of development well before the end of Reception. Pupils' high rates of progress arise from teaching which is consistently well-planned and executed. More able pupils maintain the high rate of progress and standards of which they are capable due to receiving greater challenge. Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress and attainment has improved, assisting pupils in gaining entry to their first-choice schools, often with scholarships or other subject specific awards. This is the result of highly focused monitoring of teaching and learning which enables specific focus on any individual strengths and weaknesses. Pupils' excellent outcomes are promoted most effectively by senior leaders' high expectations, supported by staff training. Efficient lesson planning, common teaching strategies followed by all, and a focus on problem solving and collaboration, are consistent factors in the classroom. Pupils, therefore, have clear and consistent expectations for their learning; they know their specific individual targets and are motivated to achieve them.

- 3.6 Pupils acquire excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects as a result of well-paced, lively teaching which often includes exciting activities. Consequently, pupils' enthusiasm and curiosity is triggered and they learn quickly. Pupils use different source materials adroitly to synthesise and present their findings, such as in science and history. They exhibit deft skills in model making such as cutting, sanding, painting and decorating in design and technology. Older pupils, who have just started Latin, translate short sentences independently, their confidence supported by clear, energetic teaching and helpful resources. Many pupils have excellent sporting ability and display well-developed hand/eye coordination; for example, skilfully passing the ball and catching cleanly. Most pupils are exceptionally confident swimmers. This is the result of specialist teaching and excellent well-maintained facilities, available from the youngest years. In the woodland learning area, pupils demonstrate competent woodcraft skills in their safe use of tools and resources to whittle and to lash wood together. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all the pupils agreed that their teachers know their subjects well and are supportive. A small minority indicated that lessons are not interesting, though this was neither supported in inspection observations nor pupil discussions. Almost all parents agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, pupils are excellent communicators. They are articulate and their thoughtful responses commonly reflect active listening which is taught and modelled successfully by teachers. Children in Nursery listen attentively to a story, answering questions and following instructions confidently. Older pupils' oral fluency enables them to discuss issues sensibly, and they explain their ideas with assurance. Children in the EYFS develop excellent pre-reading skills, their competence in identifying and blending sounds a strong contributor to their emerging reading and writing skills. They are able to progress well in line with their abilities due to phonics teaching in cross-year groups. The work of pupils in the prep school shows highly competent writing which includes use of imagination and sophisticated descriptive vocabulary to engage the reader. Older pupils demonstrate proficient technical skills as seen in their recognition and use of alliteration and personification. Most pupils demonstrate written comprehension skills in line with their high reading ability. Pupils state that they enjoy reading, supported by a book club run by the librarian and lists of suggested reading material.
- 3.8 Pupils are excellent mathematicians who love the subject and relish the opportunity to apply their skills when problem solving. They are willing to take a risk in their learning and to tackle challenging questions. Children in the EYFS develop a strong understanding of patterns within number through play with varied resources. Younger pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of shape and angle, as well as strong computational skills. Pupils in Year 6 have a competent understanding of substitution in algebra. For example, they can find the n th term of an arithmetic sequence and identify patterns in the sequence. Application of mathematical skills is evident in many subjects, such as aiding pupils' ability to understand measurement and ratios of ingredients in food technology. In science, pupils use thermometers to precisely measure the temperature that sugar

dissolves and draw graphs to represent their findings. Pupils in Year 3 use four-figure grid references confidently and with accuracy. Pupils solve challenges independently due to teaching's emphasis on problem-solving and skilful questioning to guide their thinking.

- 3.9 Pupils have highly competent computing skills and demonstrate excitement as they embark on tasks. As they move through the school they develop highly efficient skills in handling data, presentation software, coding, emailing and research. Younger pupils are beginning to understand the logical steps needed in coding through a combination of physical movement and enjoyable programmes. Pupils are able to synthesise information from appropriate websites and create a presentation, for example on a planet. Older pupils show a clear understanding of the need to interrogate any online profile and, in creating their own profiles, deepen their understanding of E-safety. Highly enjoyable and apposite software used as short lesson starters, harnesses pupils' enthusiasm and enables them to hone their skills.
- 3.10 Pupils begin to develop critical thinking skills from an early age. Children in Reception are absorbed by the natural world and make detailed observational drawings. They can use their senses to make predictions, learning to use correct descriptive language. Older pupils in the pre-prep predict the correct answer and explain their reasoning coherently. In many subjects, such as Latin and computing, pupils show considerable ability to work independently and solve any difficulties, supported by carefully chosen resources. Pupils report that their independent approach to learning is reinforced by the teachers' frequent reminders of the school's core learning skills. They develop their thinking skills highly effectively through teachers' consistent strategy of answering their question with a question. Pupils analyse and synthesise information from various sources to enable them to make hypotheses, such as when older pupils discussed why exploration was possible in Elizabethan England. However, they do not consistently apply their research skills and creativity in extended assignments which do not currently form a regular part of programmes of study.
- 3.11 Pupils successfully develop their abilities in a wide range of interests both within the curriculum and in after-school activities. They are proud of their achievements in school teams in local fixtures, enjoying particular success in water polo, swimming, football, tennis and cricket. Pupils who play for the local premier league academy have been selected for teams that reached the final in elite football tournaments. Individual pupils compete at high level in baseball, judo and swimming and the school takes an active interest in supporting their talents. Pupils have been successful in having poems published or being shortlisted for the final of the Young Writers Competition. All pupils who recently took LAMDA examinations were successful. Many pupils take part in high-quality annual drama performances. Talented thespians are supported in a popular drama group and the school facilitates several pupils who act professionally.
- 3.12 Pupils of all ages demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes towards learning. Keen to learn and to do their best, they are enthusiastic, engaged and cooperative. The pupils are ambitious and self-motivated and respond to teachers' high expectations for effort with a genuine desire to improve. They confidently ask questions and respond well when staff prompt them to solve difficulties for themselves. These attitudes, which are clearly initiated and modelled by governors, leaders and staff, create in class an evident sense of purpose and application, along with support for one another.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 As they move through the school, pupils make rapid progress in developing their self-understanding and confidence. Younger children learn to recognise and be proud that with effort they can do something for themselves. Pupils, including those with SEND, clearly understand their strengths and what they need to do to address any individual problems. Whilst in the questionnaire a small minority of pupils did not agree that teachers' feedback helps them to improve, pupils told inspectors that they are encouraged by comments from teachers which enable them to gauge how well they are doing.

Scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that marking is consistently helpful. Pupils are confident whilst being modest about their successes. They are happy to be challenged and take great pleasure when their efforts are successful. Leaders have created a culture where staff go beyond their normal duties to support and work with pupils. Consequently, pupils feel safe to take risks and attempt new challenges, supported within an environment where warm and trusting relationships prevail. Pupils develop resilience, such as when they follow a route with a map but without adult help on the Year 8 residential trip. The self-understanding of older pupils is evident in their reflective self-portraits, in their insightful response to literature, and in their perceptive discussions in personal, social and health education (PSHE).

- 3.15 Children develop their capacity for decision making from Nursery, as observed when they used easily accessible resources to select the most appropriate vehicles and a route for their train track. Pupils in Year 2 often decide whether to agree, build on, or challenge a peer's response, in a well-established class routine. Older pupils told inspectors that they decide carefully on what they want to get out of their final year at school; for example, to enter scholarships or work hard to try for a better team. Within the school community, pupils decide whether they would like to join a pupil committee. They quickly become aware of the concept of a good and bad choice through discussion topics in PSHE. Staff respond to pupils' queries by asking them to consider what they could do. They readily support individuals who find making good choices difficult.
- 3.16 Pupils' appreciation of the non-material is well-developed. Children in the EYFS articulate with staff encouragement, altruistic feelings, for instance stating that sharing a toy makes them happy. Pupils explore their understanding of values such as writing their own five acts of kindness in response to the story of the Good Samaritan. They take pleasure in supporting one another, for instance helping a new child to log on to the IT system for the first time. During assemblies there is a palpable sense of warmth and togetherness, as pupils generously praise their peers' efforts and achievements. The pupils deeply appreciate the natural environment of the school; the space, trees and woodland school by the river, which provoke in them a sense of wonder in the natural world. Pupils assess the impact of visual and aural stimuli to help in self-understanding. For example, after studying the work of Van Gogh and the *pop art* movement they successfully reflected these ideas in their own work. Pupils relate well to the school's core values of confidence, character and courage, stating confidently their understanding that character is internal and makes them unique. They develop an understanding of the spiritual dimension of drama and the world of imagination when performing in thought provoking plays such as *Private Peaceful* or *Jabberwocky*, staged in the woods after dark.
- 3.17 Pupils readily subscribe to the school's rules and system for managing their behaviour, as reflected in the questionnaires, where all the pupils and almost all the parents agree that good behaviour is expected. Whilst good behaviour is the norm, sensitive support is given to pupils who have more difficulty conforming, so that recourse to sanctions is rare. Pupils of all ages feel genuinely proud when they are awarded a badge for their behaviour. They have a notably strong sense of right and wrong, for instance showing empathy for Victorian children forced to work in dangerous conditions. The aspiration to gentlemanly conduct in line with the school's values is embedded in older pupils. They are friendly and courteous, happy to guide visitors around school. When pupils in Year 6 discuss topics such as kindness and care in PSHE, they show great insight on how to offer these and whether it is always good to help.
- 3.18 The pupils' social development is outstanding. Collaboration and mutual respect between staff and pupils, and pupils themselves, is evident all around the school, as observed when younger pupils helped each other climb trees. Productive co-operation is evident in most lessons, such as when pupils work successfully in pairs in food technology, woodland learning or science. Pupils develop the maturity to choose with whom they will work well. The oldest pupils appreciate they sometimes must work with people they would not choose, as a preparation for adult life. Many of the younger children can negotiate in their play and adults assist pupils who find social skills difficult. Pupils say they adopt

various strategies for when they cannot agree so that they need to consult a teacher only if they cannot find resolution themselves.

- 3.19 From a young age, pupils are keen to take responsibility, whether it be as line leader or class helper. Some are happy to join the school council, eco and food committees or act as a digital leader. Most pupils can point to improvements made as the result of their suggestions, such as additional recycling bins, a mixed year group activities morning and more real-life computing tasks. Others act as buddies to assist younger peers moving up to the prep school, or read with younger ones. Pupils take their concern for the wider community seriously and each year collectively and individually raise funds for a range of charities which have been selected by the school council. Their understanding of others' needs is broadened as they learn about their chosen charities in assemblies. This prompted, for example, their taking food to a local food bank and visiting a home for elderly people. Pupils strongly assert their feeling of belonging to the school community and prefects state that they undertake their role for the school, not personal glory.
- 3.20 Pupils are proactively accepting of one another, regardless of their cultural background. Children in the EYFS develop an age-appropriate understanding of the major cultural and faith festivals often enhanced by parent presentations, which increases as they grow older and revisit topics. Pupils develop an awareness of a different country, people and language since they start French from an early age. They are markedly interested in learning about other faiths and cultures and all those spoken to said diversity is never an issue but welcomed as 'cool'. The strong sense of belonging to the school community is held by all, including those from different cultural backgrounds. Pupils are adamant that they treat everyone the same, and this is reinforced by staff who promote equality in class. Pupils' awareness is enriched by events such as languages week, national days, themed lunches and *Black History Month*. Almost all the parents agreed in the questionnaire that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance and responds effectively should pupils use unkind language to each other.
- 3.21 Pupils develop an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy and balanced lifestyle. They recognise the role of nutrition in health; for example, younger pupils explained they add vegetables to their lunch 'because they are good for you and make you strong'. Pupils are very aware of the importance of sleep and bedtime routines. They enjoy a wide variety of sports including early morning runs and understand the benefit of exercise on their general health. As they grow older, they become aware of how to keep emotionally and mentally healthy, informed by discussions in PSHE. The school's culture, actively promoted by leaders, is very responsive to pupils' wellbeing. Staff help pupils to manage workload when necessary and allow a breather from class should a particular pupil need a break. Pupils all agree that they can talk to a number of staff about any concerns they may have, including a specialist emotional literacy support assistant. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to stay safe online and understand how to manage personal risk. They are similarly aware of safely managing tools and equipment. Almost all parents agreed in the questionnaire that the school encourages their child to adopt a healthy lifestyle and all agreed that their child learns in a safe environment.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and governor with oversight of safeguarding, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting inspector
Miss Kaye Lovejoy	Compliance team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mrs Jane Crouch	Team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)
Mrs Jeanette Adams	Team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school)