

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

St Peter's School

January/February 2023

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School's Details

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 St Peter's School is an independent co-educational day school. Founded in 1946, the school is a registered charity, managed by a limited company, whose directors form the board of governors. The school comprises Sunnylands Nursery for children aged three and four years, the Lower School for pupils from four to seven years, and the Upper School for those from seven to eleven years. The headteacher took up his post in 2020.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to ensure that the values of community, confidence, creativity and curiosity are embedded in all aspects of school life. It seeks to instil in pupils a love of learning and to foster an ethos of mutual respect. The school endeavours to promote friendship, Christian values, and tolerance for others. Its objectives are to develop pupils' honesty, kindness and loyalty and to enable them to achieve academically and in sport and the arts.

About the pupils

1.3 Pupils are drawn from the local area. Assessment data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared with pupils taking the same tests nationally. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 6 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist support. English is an additional language (EAL) for 17 pupils, who are supported by their class teachers in this regard. Data used by the school have identified 12 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 5 other pupils because of their special talents in sport or music.

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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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.

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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

Key findings

2.1 The school does not meet all of the required 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 should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

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. 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 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 Most of the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance are in place, with the exception of those relating to some recruitment checks on staff. In a small number of cases, references for staff in teaching roles were not obtained before they commenced employment. In a small number of cases, when the enhanced criminal record certificate had not been seen before staff commenced work, the school did not carry out separate barred list checks.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but that in paragraph 7 [safeguarding] is not met.

Action point 1

The school must ensure that it has obtained references before staff commence employment [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

Action point 2

The school must ensure that barred list checks are carried out when the enhanced criminal record certificate has not been seen before staff commence working at the school [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.7 and 3.9].

Action point 3

The proprietor must ensure that it maintains suitable oversight of safeguarding procedures, particularly those relating to recruitment of staff [paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS 3.7].

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks reported under Part 4 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 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.
- 2.14 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 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 school does not ensure that the leadership and management, including governance, 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 in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 4

The proprietor must ensure that the leaders and governance 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 [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)].

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.
 - All pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and have high levels of knowledge across all subjects.
 - Pupils' communication and language skills are strong; they are confident, articulate speakers, active listeners, avid readers and write with accuracy and creativity.
 - Pupils have highly developed musical and creative skills.
 - Pupils are interested, engaged and curious learners who enjoy working collaboratively.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils are kind, respectful and tolerant of all in their diverse community.
 - Pupils' moral understanding and ability to distinguish between right and wrong is strong.
 - Pupils are spiritually reflective and demonstrate deep appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.
 - Pupils demonstrate excellent social skills and contribute generously to their school and local community.
 - Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the importance of personal safety and appreciate the benefits of being physically and mentally healthy.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - Develop the pupils' scientific and technological skills further, to enable them to engage with these areas fully in the next stages of their education.
 - Enable pupils to develop greater resilience and independence in their individual learning, by providing increased opportunities for more risk taking in their everyday work.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages have a high level of knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. Older pupils make excellent progress in being able to speak and write in grammatically accurate sentences in German and Spanish. Pupils have excellent aesthetic and creative knowledge and skills. Year 6 pupils

designed beautiful Mardi Gras masks and completed excellent artwork in the style of Beatriz Milhazes, as part of their work on Brazil. Pupils' deep knowledge is enhanced by the cross curricular approach to teaching themes. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment and demonstrate competent musicality and rhythm. Older pupils successfully composed their own percussive music, including an ostinato and crescendo, in the style of the opening to Holst's Mars symphony. Pupils have excellent geographic skills. Year 2 pupils can successfully use simple compass directions and older pupils accurately use six-figure gird references to find locations. Pupils have in-depth historical knowledge, and an empathic understanding of what life was like in different periods of time. Older pupils completed moving accounts of life in the Victorian workhouse. Pupils have excellent scientific knowledge. They can use scientific vocabulary accurately to describe the properties of different materials and how these impact on the way materials are used. Year 2 pupils in science reflected that a lunchbox needs to be clean, light to carry and strong so that sandwiches aren't squashed. They can also record information in tables and identify what must be kept the same when designing a fair investigation. However, pupils' science skills are less well developed in comparison to their knowledge as there are insufficient opportunities for investigations and independent recording of evidence. Pupils have strong physical skills. For example, they displayed excellent progress when developing passing skills from a static to more dynamic drill during a games lesson.

- 3.6 By the time pupils are ready to leave the school, all pupils have made excellent progress from their starting points. This was confirmed by observations of pupils' work in books and in lessons. It was also confirmed by analysis of the school's own assessment data, with pupils achieving attainment results in standardised tests above the average, and some well above the average, for pupils taking the same tests nationally. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) make rapid progress in line with their peers, because of the effective support they receive in lessons, small groups or one-to-one intervention. Leaders and staff support pupils' progress through the focused interpretation of information from assessment data to ensure all pupils receive the guidance and encouragement they need to give of their best. Pupils are academically well prepared for entry to their future schools with most gaining places at their first-choice schools.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages are excellent communicators. The youngest children know their basic sounds and enjoy playing word games to extend this skill. Younger pupils develop excellent cursive handwriting and they read fluently and expressively above age expectation, because of the strong focus placed on these skills by the school's leadership. Pupils write effectively for a range of purposes, for example writing a formal letter from the point of view of a class toy explaining his difficulty in finding a good home. When writing a love letter from a tadpole to a butterfly, pupils in Year 2 used a combination of their own ideas, a thesaurus, the class reading book and a differentiated word bank effectively to support their composition. The oldest pupils write descriptively, with confidence at considerable length and with great accuracy. They produced excellent, persuasive texts using alliteration, emotive language, rhetorical questions and other suitable devices to advertise a toy or place. Pupils skilfully interrogate complex texts such as *Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist* and infer from passages in The *Road to Freedom by Lesa Cline-Ransome*, to show how a character might feel after an event in the story and why. Pupils successfully apply their writing skills across subjects because of the strong cross curricular links built into the school's curriculum.
- 3.8 Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They work well in pairs or small groups to achieve success together. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt the school equips pupils with the team working and collaborative skills they need in later life. EYFS children play independently and in small groups without direct adult intervention. Pupils willingly take initiative and volunteer to demonstrate their ability to use Spanish vocabulary accurately. All pupils in Year 3 worked effectively in groups to work out how to measure the perimeter of shapes. Pupils take leadership in learning when given the opportunity, particularly when improving their work. They use purple pens to annotate work, checking against clear success criteria before work is marked. Pupils demonstrate a good level of independence and initiative in response to tasks when working collaboratively. However, their

- ability to take risks and show leadership in their individual work is more limited on a day-to-day basis compared with the higher level of risk taking they demonstrate during 'off' curriculum themed days. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because they feel listened to and valued. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt the school listens to what pupils have to say.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages and abilities have strong mathematical skills and knowledge. EYFS children demonstrated a confident understanding of number when solving a verbal mathematical problem, identifying how many marbles a hungry monster had eaten. They use methods appropriate to their ability, with some writing number sentences to add six and seven together, and others using tactile resources for support. Younger pupils displayed competent counting in multiples of five. Older pupils showed clear understanding of prime numbers when identifying and explaining patterns of numbers. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated an excellent understanding of subject specific terminology focusing on triangles and quadrilaterals. They progressed well in their understanding of how best to calculate angles of shapes. Assured mathematical competence is developed through careful sequential questioning and activities which build confidence as well as opportunities to work at different levels of support and challenge. Mathematics is used throughout the curriculum, for instance when pupils made reference to the ratios they use for water and flour when making bread. They interpret graphs in science, and in more advanced coding they apply mathematical formula in order to design computer games.
- 3.10 Pupils have excellent information and communication technology (ICT) skills and apply this expertise effectively in other subjects across the curriculum. EYFS children are confident using an interactive screen and happily dropped and dragged words into the right pile. Younger pupils demonstrated their developing understanding of how to use a digital painting and drawing programme to create backgrounds for story boards. Older linguists used software programmes in German lessons to enhance their understanding of verbs in describing other people. Pupils in Year 2 keenly demonstrated their understanding of terms such as "nesting", "collisions" and "debugging" when trying to make their superheroes move across the screen. Year 6 pupils talked enthusiastically about their World Cup blog, their use of a coding program to design computer games and their website designing task. They have strong word processing skills and competently use a range of tools to produce typed best copies of written work. An online learning platform is effectively used by the pupils to support their studies. Pupils develop comprehensive skills and knowledge in this area because governors have ensured the provision of sufficient and suitable ICT resources, specialist teaching and opportunities to use their skills across subjects.
- 3.11 EYFS pupils competently demonstrate emerging study skills. They hypothesise that ice might melt quicker if it was near a radiator. Pupils can justify their opinions about why babies may have more bones than adults. Older pupils analyse information about the Roman and Celtic armies to offer explanations as to who would be defeated in a battle and why. They justify their predictions in science investigations about which materials would be better insulators or conductors based on their everyday experiences. When reading, pupils can infer information from text in an age-appropriate manner to explain why events happen. These skills are developed because teachers have a particular expertise in asking open-ended questions to encourage deeper thinking.
- 3.12 Pupils succeed as individuals and in teams. The school were finalists in their association's national awards for outstanding work in the community. The school was awarded the Rose of Northamptonshire Award 2021 for community work. The under eleven football team progressed to National Finals in 2022. A group of Year 5 pupils won a local science Olympiad. Individuals have achieved success in cross country running, athletics, and football. Some pupils have achieved music graded exams results above levels expected for their age.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils have a secure understanding of what is right and wrong. Their behaviour is excellent in class and when moving independently around school. Older pupils feel that their strong moral code is embedded because of the school's clearly developed and consistent approach to behaviour management. This is well understood by all pupils who said it was used appropriately and consistently, and it works. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school identifies any poor behaviour and tries to make things better. Pupils are positive about the process of reflection in helping them understand their actions, the effect on others and how they could make reparation or apologise and learn from their mistakes. Older pupils wrote their own rules after reflecting on the Ten Commandments. They have a well-developed personal values system and sense of justice because they are encouraged to reflect on the ethical questions that arise in their religious education and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lessons.
- 3.15 Pupils have highly developed social skills because of the broad range of opportunities they are given to work and play together in their class groups and across and within key stages. They are a strong cohesive community; in this way the school fulfils its aims. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school helps pupils to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Younger pupils reflected carefully on the importance of friendship when writing recipes for happiness and how to be good friends. Older pupils show a responsible care for younger pupils, naturally jumping in to cut up food when they sit together in their house groups for lunch. EYFS children learnt the importance of working together and listening to each other to solve a problem when arranging floor tiles numbered to twenty, because of the gentle encouragement from their teachers. In many lessons, pupils work effectively with their partners, such as when discussing the cause and effect of Boudica's revolt against the Roman invasion. In the choir, pupils listened carefully together to each part when singing in harmony, creating a beautiful performance of a newly learnt song.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of the importance of faith in some people's lives and that everyone can learn from faith whether a believer or not. They value learning about the major world faiths, saying it teaches them to respect other people's choices and opinions, and to be tolerant. Older pupils enjoy thinking about the creation stories from different religions respecting that each story was 'special in its own unique way'. They spoke articulately about the importance of the concept of forgiveness, having discussed the story of the prodigal son. Their spiritual knowledge is developed through the comprehensive religious education programme. They are given many opportunities to share their own faiths in assemblies or in class, celebrating Eid and Diwali for example, or listening to peers who are Sikh explain why they wear bangles. Pupils value the school prayer and the tradition to pray at lunch time in whatever form is relevant to them or as an opportunity for quiet reflection. Much of the deep appreciation pupils show for their natural world is developed through the many opportunities to learn and interact with it as well as the strong focus on outdoor learning from the school's leadership.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate profound respect and appreciation for the diversity of cultures represented in their own school and local community. Pupils happily share their own traditions such as Indian dancing or the favourite national food for Lithuania, knowing that the school promotes tolerance and acceptance through the assembly themes. These are closely linked to the topics in the PSHE curriculum. Pupils have a strong understanding that everyone should be fairly treated regardless of their skin colour, race or gender. Older pupils reflected deeply on what is considered to be 'normal' and understand there are different perceptions of this. They express empathy for difference and reflect with maturity on the dangers of stereotyping others. Pupils are learning sign language which helps them understand the difficulties faced by those in the deaf community.
- 3.18 Pupils have a well-established understanding of the importance of being healthy. All parents who responded to the questionnaire felt the school encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils

are physically active because of the inclusive sports provision which encourages participation by all, through the provision of such sports as archery as well as more traditional school sports. The younger pupils develop their understanding of a healthy lifestyle through the opportunities to be active, learning in the mud kitchen, orchard and wooded school grounds. EYFS children learn to make healthy choices at snack time. They can clearly articulate what are healthy food choices for teeth or make suggestions for the healthy foods *Red Riding Hood* should pack in her basket for grandma. Older pupils have a strong understanding of how to recognise their own mental health needs. They take appropriate time outside of lessons to find space to think and to be quiet or find opportunities to talk through worries with their teachers. This is because of the strong focus on mental health in the school curriculum. The older pupils understand personal safety in a wider context, including online.

- 3.19 Pupils make excellent contributions to their own and the wider community. Year 6 pupils contribute through positions of responsibility in the school, including house captains, head boy and girl, librarians, tour guides and sports captains. Pupils from different year groups form the school council and eco committee. At the time of the inspection, the eco committee was holding a design competition to improve parts of the outdoor learning area, of benefit to the whole school community. Pupils have been active contributing to their local community completing 'litter picks'. They also designed posters for the new litter bins for the local council which are displayed around Kettering town. Pupils initiated a fundraising, dressing-up day to raise money to plant bee friendly flowers in the school garden, so enhancing the environment for all. The local residential care home is regularly visited, for example by the school choir or by EYFS children who helped to build gingerbread houses. Individual children have encouraged others to contribute to national cancer charities. The whole school community supports many national fund-raising events. The school council ensures that pupils' ideas are valued, when organising the themes in support of national charity events.
- 3.20 All pupils, from the youngest in the school, have a strong understanding of the importance of making good choices and the impact this has on their lives or that of others. EYFS children choose their own activities and know that they must share toys carefully allowing a large group to play imaginatively together. Year 2 pupils choose to ask for help from their friends before the teacher because of a class 'three before me rule', so developing understanding that group support and collaboration can lead to all succeeding. Older pupils demonstrated their high-quality decision-making when reflecting on how they should best answer a mathematical problem tackling the angles of triangles. Pupils across the school are all active participants in lessons, with comments in their questionnaire responses showing this is because they felt confident lessons were well designed to help them learn and have fun. Older pupils explained that they chose to do certain tasks because they knew these skills were needed for the things they wanted to be when they grew up, and it was important to develop the skills early.
- 3.21 Pupils of all ages have excellent self-awareness and a clear understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. They are quietly confident and well prepared for the next stage of their lives. This is underpinned by the school vision 'to provide every child with the opportunity to develop their full academic, emotional, physical and moral potential in a safe yet challenging environment, with the child at the heart of all they do'. Older pupils were able to identify subjects and areas of work which were strengths because of the supportive comments from their teachers. They feel they have high levels of self-confidence and are prepared to speak or sing in front of an audience because they are given many opportunities to perform in assemblies and plays. They develop assured self-esteem and are encouraged to be increasingly self-confident through participation in challenging tasks on their residential trip. These challenges help them build resilience. Pupils said that they often have really hard spelling words to learn, but that it is important to try their best and persevere even though they may be wrong. They explained 'If I don't try there is no way I will get it right, if I try there is a chance, I will get it right!'

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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 a group of governors, 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 Vivien Sergeant Reporting inspector

Mr Ian Martin Compliance team inspector (Senior deputy head, ISA school)

Mr Henry Marshall Team inspector (Deputy head pastoral, IAPS school)