



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

St Joseph's Park Hill School

September 2022

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School's Details

School	St Joseph's Park Hill School			
DfE number	888/6011			
Registered charity number	290544			
Address	St Joseph's Park Hill School Padiham Road Burnley Lancashire BB12 6TG			
Telephone number	01282 455622			
Email address	office@parkhillschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Maria Whitehead			
Chair of governors	Miss Lara Oddie			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	102			
	EYFS	30	Infants	22
	Juniors	50		
Inspection dates	27 to 29 September 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Joseph's Park Hill School is a co-educational Catholic day school. It was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1913 and moved to its current premises in 1957. The school is owned by its trustees, the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy. The management of the school is devolved to a board of governors, which includes at least one trustee in its number.
- 1.2 The school is divided into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children aged three and four years, the infants for pupils aged between four and seven years, and the juniors for pupils aged between seven and eleven years.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to provide an environment where children are happy and are free to express themselves. It aims to encourage children to be aware of the needs of others, to develop spiritually and to be respectful to others in an inclusive community, where, it intends, success is celebrated and hard work is rewarded.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils come from professional and business backgrounds in Burnley and the surrounding towns. Nationally standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom are supported in class or individually. No pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHC). English is an additional language (EAL) for two pupils, none of whom need additional support. The curriculum is modified for pupils identified as the most able in the school's population.

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. 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 18–21] 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.

- Pupils make excellent progress and achieve highly in both academic and other areas.
- Pupils of all ages display excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.
- Pupils are excellent communicators. They use wide-ranging vocabulary in their speaking and writing, read fluently and develop excellent listening skills from a very young age.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning, responding to challenges with commitment and enthusiasm

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils' spiritual understanding and appreciation of non-material aspects of life is highly developed. They appreciate art, music and the beauty of their surroundings.
- Pupils' manners are excellent and they are courteous and polite. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour and show respect for cultures other than their own.
- Pupils' social development and collaboration skills are excellent. They take pride in contributing responsibly to the everyday life of the school.
- Pupils throughout the school develop high levels of perseverance, resilience and self-confidence.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to have a strong understanding of how to improve their work through consistently clear advice in written feedback.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 Throughout the school pupils make excellent progress over time and achieve highly in all areas, thus fulfilling the school's aim to produce pupils who are motivated to learn and have the confidence to believe that they can achieve anything if they work hard and believe in themselves. Pupils' high levels of success are well supported by the quality of teaching they receive and through planning which builds on highly effective assessment and provides targeted support when required. Evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, and the school's own assessment data show attainment

to be above average in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils have enjoyed considerable academic success in recent years, gaining places and scholarships at their first choice of senior school, many of which have rigorous academic selection criteria. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all children make rapid progress in relation to their starting points, so that all reach or surpass national age-related expectations by the end of Reception. Next steps in learning are clearly identified and shared with pupils and parents to ensure a co-ordinated approach. Pupils with SEND make equally good progress as other pupils, and often outperform expectations, thanks in part to the effective specialist support they receive. Excellent progress was seen in most lessons. For example, EYFS children rapidly assimilated the correct names for two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, rectangles, triangles and hexagons, and were successful in finding these shapes in everyday items within the classroom. Almost all parents and all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables pupils to learn and make progress.

- 3.6 Pupils develop excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning, including aesthetic and creative education. Strong relationships between teachers and pupils create a purposeful and productive learning environment. Challenging activities ensure that pupils of all abilities develop their skills well. For example, EYFS children made rapid progress in learning the sound made by the letter 'i' and were able to write three letter words containing this sound. In an art activity, pupils rapidly learned how to use perspective and colour to show light and shadow when drawing an apple. In a dance class, pupils displayed grace and poise while learning a routine from *The Lion King* involving scarves. In almost all teaching, well-chosen probing questions, all informed by strong subject knowledge, encourage pupils to think deeply about issues. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they feel that support and encouragement from their teachers helps them to become better learners. Pupils show a good understanding of their previous learning and are encouraged to apply this knowledge to new situations. For example, in a mathematics class, older pupils successfully applied previously learnt techniques to solving complex multi-step problems. School leaders contribute to the success of the pupils by creating an ethos which supports and encourages pupils and staff in the pursuit of academic success. In the questionnaire, all parents agreed that the school benefits from strong governance, leadership and management.
- 3.7 Communication skills throughout the school are excellent. Pupils are confident and articulate speakers, and enthusiastically embrace opportunities for public speaking, such as discussions in class and presenting reports in assemblies. Pupils enjoy participating in class discussion, and in interviews and informal discussions expressed their views with maturity and confidence. They are fluent readers and enjoy reading aloud in lessons and broaden their understanding by engaging with suitable classroom texts and choosing books from the school library. Reception children have a good understanding of the sounds letters make and their writing and speaking skills develop rapidly as they grow in confidence and maturity. As pupils progress through the school, they write with increasing fluency and sophistication. For example, older pupils showed an excellent understanding of persuasive writing techniques which they used to good effect when constructing their speeches as part of the process for selection onto the school council. In English, pupils are given many opportunities for free writing. Their work demonstrates excellent imagination, a wide vocabulary and accurate use of grammar. Pupils use technical language confidently and competently. Younger prep school pupils showed an excellent grasp of language when answering questions in Spanish. From an early age pupils learn to listen closely to their teachers, as was seen in an EYFS story period where young children were spellbound by the story of a girl who ate a hot pepper.
- 3.8 Pupils are very competent mathematicians, successfully using their excellent calculation skills across the curriculum. Children in the EYFS can count with confidence up to 10 and back to zero. Young pupils are secure in their number bonds, successfully adding and subtracting to ten using a variety of techniques. Older pupils demonstrate outstanding mathematical reasoning. For example, senior pupils accurately computed complex divisions and multiplications in a mental maths challenge. Pupils build upon previously learnt skills and can apply these skills to new challenges such as when solving multi-step problems using their established knowledge of adding, subtracting, multiplying and

dividing. More able mathematicians compete successfully in national mathematical competitions. Pupils are comfortable using their skills across a wide range of other subjects such as when weighing items in science.

- 3.9 Pupils of all ages competently use a broad range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as well as specific computing skills such as coding. The range and complexity of their skills increase as they move through the school. Younger prep school pupils hugely enjoy using a computer program to test their knowledge of times tables. Older pupils are adept at word processing, creating presentations and using spreadsheets to analyse data. They were observed successfully using their ICT skills to research a favourite author and then present their chosen information in an infographic. Governors' investment in laptops has impacted positively on pupils' development in this area.
- 3.10 Pupils have highly developed study skills, hypothesising, analysing and synthesising across the curriculum, encouraged by well-directed questions from their teachers. Inspectors observed many opportunities for and examples of analytical thinking. This process begins in the EYFS where children engage in independent and collaborative learning. Comprehension exercises provide pupils with the chance to develop their analytical skills. For example, young pupils showed excellent analytical skills when studying a text about lions and then deciding what provision they would need to make to keep lions in a wildlife park. Others showed confidence when using dictionaries to search out definitions of challenging words such as 'ancestors' and 'archaeologists'. Research skills are developed through a range of independent tasks with an element of choice. For example, in a science lesson, pupils investigated the properties of rocks and then correctly identified the six rock types they were examining.
- 3.11 Pupils are successful in an extensive range of creative and physical pursuits and are supported in their achievements by the wide-ranging extra-curricular programme, and specialist sports coaching. Teachers' encouragement empowers this achievement through enrichment activities which challenge pupils to develop skills beyond the classroom. Pupils are successful in individual external music examinations. Drama is an important part of school life with many pupils enjoying success in speech and drama examinations and in school plays. School teams of all ages are successful in a variety of local and national competitions, and pupils represent regional teams in a range of sports, including netball, and particularly cross country running. Pupils have also enjoyed success in art competitions.
- 3.12 Pupils are enthusiastic and ambitious learners, with a genuine desire to succeed. They are curious and willing to learn new skills, and not afraid to take risks. Pupils, encouraged by the excellent relationship with their teachers, recognise that making mistakes is part of the learning process. They are resilient and confident in the classroom, approaching every task willingly and with high degrees of motivation. During a continuous provision session, children in the EYFS were totally focused on a variety of activities, ranging from a group writing a letter to King Charles to children occupying themselves with their own games, for example a boy with a doll and another child with building blocks. They maintain high levels of concentration and perseverance for their age. Mutual support between pupils is a strong feature of the school. Pupils, studying the book *King Flashypants*, collaborated and shared ideas appropriately when discussing about a balance of payment deficit and why it might be included in the text as the character has spent all his money. Throughout the school pupils challenge each other's ideas in a constructive way whilst being supportive and respectful of each other's views. A scrutiny of work from pupils across the school showed that all work was neatly presented and kept in an organised manner.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils have a well-developed sense of self-understanding. Pupils flourish and grow in self-confidence through the positive encouragement they receive from class teachers and other staff who provide individual support. They benefit from the warm and trusting relationships they have with their

teachers who know their pupils well and encourage them to share any concerns they may have. Pupils appreciate the helpful oral feedback they receive from their teachers, but say that written comments which lack specificity do not help them understand how to improve. Inspectors agree that the school's marking policy is not used consistently across all subjects and years. Pupils develop resilience and perseverance from an early age. For example, Reception children showed much determination in their phonics lesson when practising writing the letter 'i' and senior prep pupils persevered when learning to play *The Skye Boat* song on their recorders, something that many initially found challenging.

- 3.15 Pupils practise and develop their decision-making skills from an early age. Reception children are able to select which activity they will do in lessons and at breaktime. Over time they become adept at making choices and are increasingly aware of the consequences of their decisions. Pupils are prepared to take risks and are not afraid to make mistakes, knowing that they will be supported in their learning journey. They deliberate carefully over which activities to join, whether to be members of the school council or which position of responsibility to apply for. Most lessons involve an element of choice and decision-making. For example, pupils could choose which author to investigate in an ICT project and young mathematicians chose which objects to weigh.
- 3.16 Pupils exhibit a deep spiritual awareness. They develop a good understanding of the world's major religions through effective religious education (RE) and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programmes and regular assemblies. Many faiths are represented within the pupil body, with the principles of kindness and respect emphasised by both teachers and pupils. Pupils willingly embrace the example of St Joseph whose values of humility, gentleness and patience are key elements in the school's ethos. Pupils consider philosophical and ethical concepts thoughtfully. For example, they reflected carefully on the moral message that the Bible story of Ruth contained about caring for others ahead of yourself. Older pupils considered how the concept of God's love applied to modern day life. Pupils have a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of school life, as seen in prayer time when pupils gave thanks for things such as their friends, family and school. Pupils of all ages enjoy the woodland learning environment which increases their appreciation of nature through activities such as building a fire and weaving a living hedge from willow. Pupils of all ages demonstrate an appreciation of their own surroundings, particularly the woodland learning environment, which they were keen to share with inspectors.
- 3.17 Pupils are highly self-disciplined, and their personal development is characterised by excellent standards of behaviour and respect, both towards each other and staff. In interview, pupils reported that there was hardly any bullying, and that when relationship issues arise between pupils, the school's effective pastoral care systems help them to resolve them. Pupils develop strong relationships derived from the ethos of the school which is based on mutual respect, and kindness. In discussions pupils articulated a clear understanding of right and wrong. From the youngest age they are very mindful of the well-being of others and are considerate and caring in their relationships with peers and adults. Almost all parents and all pupils agreed that the school actively promotes and expects good behaviour. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They support and understand the school rules and behaviour policy. The development of their moral values begins in the EYFS where children learn to understand school and class rules, share, take turns and be polite to staff and each other.
- 3.18 Pupils' social awareness is excellent, and this helps to create an extremely happy community. This is engendered by the school culture which encourages relaxed relationships and social confidence. This reflects the commitment by the governors and leadership to the school's ethos which recognises the unique individuality of every child. EYFS children were observed socialising happily together, working well with others in lessons and sharing toys at break times. Pupils collaborate well in every aspect of school life, both in lessons and elsewhere. Pupils of all ages come to understand their own and others' emotions and how this can influence their actions and impact on those around them. This was seen in a senior PSHE lesson where pupils made thoughtful and mature suggestions as to how theoretical relationship issues could be resolved.

- 3.19 Pupils acquire excellent social skills through the many opportunities the school provides to engage with others in joint ventures. Through the 'seeds and gardeners' programme older pupils act as mentors to reception children, and in a lesson in the woodland area were seen to assist them decorate a hat using natural materials. In interviews, pupils, spoke of a caring, supportive and happy community in which they show genuine concern for each other. Pupils spoke very positively about working together as a team in sports competitions, and in residential trips where they learn to co-operate with each other. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team working and social skills they need in later life. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school helps them build positive relationships.
- 3.20 Pupils enjoy making a positive and meaningful contribution to the school community through roles such as sports leaders, prefects and librarians. Senior pupils form the sports crew who, under the watchful eye of a member of staff, coach younger pupils in a variety of sports and games. The active school council puts forward ideas for improvements in the school community, such as changes to the school food. Pupils are quick to stop and talk to anyone who is feeling lonely or sad. They show a mature understanding of how they can help those less fortunate than themselves, for example by raising funds and providing practical support for a range of local, national and international charities. The choir sings carols at Christmas for residents of a nearby retirement home
- 3.21 Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and stay safe. All parents and almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages pupils to learn about and adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are aided in making healthy eating choices by the ready availability of fresh fruit and vegetables at mealtimes. The youngest children understand the importance of washing hands and eating a balanced diet. They discuss healthy lifestyles in PSHE lessons and understand how to care for their teeth. Pupils acquire skills to manage stress and maintain positive mental health through various relaxation sessions. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school teaches them about safety. Pupils understand how to stay safe online, something which is regularly reinforced in ICT and PSHE lessons. Pupils appreciate the importance of physical fitness and enjoy both the formal sports programme and opportunities for recreation using the facilities provided. The 'daily mile challenge' is enjoyed by all with much excitement and desire to earn different coloured bands as they cover impressive distances over the course of the year. In interview, all could name someone they could talk to should they have any worries or concerns.
- 3.22 Pupils' show much respect for others and strongly support the great value the school places on the importance of doing so. They show excellent appreciation of the cultural diversity that surrounds them at school and within their local communities. Pupils' understanding is engendered by the strong school culture embodied by school leaders and governors. The school widens pupils' experience of diversity through PSHE and RE lessons which teach about different faiths and cultures. Pupils treat one another with kindness and consideration within a community that is calm, welcoming and inclusive. Almost all parents and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school encourages an atmosphere of respect and tolerance. Pupils develop a thorough knowledge of fundamental British values, such as respect for the rule of law and tolerance of others, through a comprehensive PSHE programme. In discussions, pupils showed an excellent understanding of what diversity, inclusion, and empathy mean in practice. They value not only themselves as unique and worthwhile people but others as well. They understand that another person's appearance, personality, beliefs, and interests bring something special to the world. The school supports this by effectively promoting its ethos and expectations of tolerance and kindness to all.

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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. 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

Mr William Ibbetson-Price	Reporting inspector
Mrs Rebecca Robertson	Compliance team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Ian Sterling	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)