



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Park Hill School

February 2020



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School's Details

School	Park Hill School			
DfE number	314/6059			
Address	Park Hill School 8 Queens Road Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT2 7SH			
Telephone number	0208 546 5496			
Email address	hello@parkhillschool.com			
Headteacher	Mr Alistair Bond			
Chair of governors	Mr Amit Mehta			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	119			
	EYFS	61	Juniors	58
Inspection dates	11 to 13 February 2020			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Park Hill School was founded in 1949 and became part of the Inspired Learning Group in 2016. Governance is provided by the ILG chairman and a management committee.
- 1.2 It is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 2 and 11. The full-time nursery opened in 2018. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises three classes for children aged 2 to 5, and the prep part of the school caters for those aged 5 to 11 years.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to develop the whole child, laying foundations for well-balanced and confident individuals who are healthy in body, mind and spirit through a nurturing approach. It seeks to embrace and celebrate individuality and creativity in a caring and safe environment, allowing each child to grow, achieve and foster a positive mindset.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the cultural diversity of the local area from which they are drawn. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability profile of the school is above average. The school has identified 13 pupils as having a range of special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia, all of whom receive additional specialist help from the school or external agencies. It has identified 15 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), five of whom receive support. Data used by the school have identified 25 pupils as being the most able or with special talents in the school's population and the curriculum is adapted to take account of their abilities in core subjects or their talents in sport and the performing and creative arts.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The 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 regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; 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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, 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 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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

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

- 2.11 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 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.

2.18 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include 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 good.

- Pupils develop advanced skills in computing and they use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently across the curriculum.
- Pupils are excellent communicators who are very articulate and express themselves confidently in both conversation and discussion.
- Pupils develop very good levels of competency in mathematics and numeracy.
- Pupils' progress is sometimes limited by an inconsistent approach to feedback and levels of expectation.
- In some subjects, pupils' levels of achievement are less successful when they are not challenged to produce extended and interesting pieces of recorded work.

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

- Pupils demonstrate excellent decision-making skills and understand that the decisions they make affect their own success and well-being.
- Pupils show mature appreciation of non-material aspects of life and of the natural world around them.
- Pupils show excellent social development and moral awareness in their behaviour, good manners and attitudes towards others.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent respect for the diversity and cultural understanding in the school.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Improve pupils' attainment further by challenging them to produce extended and interesting pieces of work in all subjects.
- Enable pupils to increase their rate of progress by improving the consistency and quality of the written feedback they receive.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 In the EYFS, pupils make fast progress for their age and ability, encouraged by the nurturing atmosphere of their environment and the wide range of colourful resources. They communicate well, express themselves clearly for their age and listen to what others have to say. As they keenly explored different ways to communicate, nursery children quickly mastered greetings in sign language. The youngest pupils took pride in making marks on paper as they collected orders in their role play café. As phonic awareness grows, children begin to make plausible attempts at spelling simple words. The oldest pupils took pride in presenting and sharing their stories which they had written in chapters electronically.

3.6 Pupils' ability to express themselves clearly and confidently in discussions is excellent. They happily take turns to both speak and listen, and they enjoy the chance to discuss what they are learning. For example, Year 1 pupils participated in lively discussions on how to add up two numbers. Younger pupils used interesting descriptive language as they confidently shared an imaginary experience of visiting aliens. Pupils listen to each other well, showing respect and consideration for what others have to say. Effective communication is modelled by staff, who encourage pupils to speak and listen respectfully,

both to each other and to adults. As pupils progress through the school, their writing skills develop more slowly, with their more advanced level of spoken communication not always being reflected by inspired choices of vocabulary in their writing to capture a reader's interest. Such progress is greater when higher expectations are shown in feedback. Most pupils become fluent readers and show good understanding of standard texts. Their good progress is supported by an effective system for hearing all pupils read.

- 3.7 Most pupils show very good knowledge, skills and understanding for their age in mathematics, science, French and the creative and performing arts. In other areas, the pupils' levels of achievement are less successful when they are not challenged to find out more for themselves or to produce extended and interesting pieces of recorded work. Where feedback gives clear guidance for next steps in learning, and advice on how to extend their written work, pupils produce greater quantity and quality, allowing their skills to develop. Pupils are aware that they have targets to help them improve, but some are less sure of the specific steps needed or success criteria to support this. Their learning is fastest where lessons are lively and interesting, for example junior pupils spoke of the excitement of using coding skills to change the colour of a gyroscope and younger pupils were inspired by exploring different ways of storytelling when presented with oriental folk tales. Almost all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their lessons have interesting activities and they are helped to make progress.
- 3.8 Pupils develop very good levels of competency in numeracy throughout the school. Reception pupils could work out how many pencils were missing from a pot and they understood the term symmetry when creating woodland pictures of butterflies using natural materials found in the park. Year 5 and 6 pupils showed a clear understanding of how to calculate the area of a triangle and some calculated the areas of more complex shapes. Pupils successfully apply mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum, including science and computing. In science, older pupils used their mathematical skills to test the impact of friction, demonstrating the ability to measure accurately. In adventure school lessons they applied their mathematical knowledge of six figure grid references and compass directions to successfully plot and follow a route.
- 3.9 Pupils acquire excellent skills in ICT, driven by the senior leaders' ambition that they are equipped for the modern technological world. Pupils demonstrate advanced skills and knowledge in both computing lessons and clubs, for which they show great enthusiasm. Pupils use portable electronic devices with ease and apply these skills in all academic subjects. They confidently locate and use electronically stored learning resources, record some of their work, and are competent when using coding and programming skills. Pupils use technology instinctively to communicate and discover information, including through QR codes displayed in classrooms. They enthusiastically describe how they can also use digital technology to create art, optical illusions, films using a green screen, and games.
- 3.10 The observation of lessons, scrutiny of work and analysis of standardised measures of attainment show that pupils make good progress over time from their individual starting points, with very good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding for their age in most areas of the curriculum. Pupils' progress is supported by the systematic tracking of standardised assessments of core skills, which is then analysed effectively by senior leaders as the foundation for future learning. Pupils with SEND and EAL show an equally good rate of progress, aided by the effective support they receive and their comprehensive individual learning plans (ILPs). The more able pupils also make good progress year on year, supported by the encouragement they receive. The youngest children successfully complete the EYFS with levels of development in line with, and often exceeding, those expected for their age. Pupils at the top of the school successfully gain entry to a range of senior schools and some are awarded scholarships. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress and most agreed that the school meets their children's individual needs effectively.

- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate good study skills for their age and are keen to learn. All parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to develop skills for their future, and all pupils who responded said that they are encouraged to think and learn for themselves. Most pupils analyse information and standard texts effectively, and they hypothesise well from an early age, for example when considering philosophical questions and undertaking investigations. Reception children showed mature development in their higher-level thinking when philosophical questions were posed such as whether they would rather control the weather or talk to animals. Year 3 pupils made secure predictions when considering the properties of different substances when investigating whether chocolate or water would melt first. Pupils are encouraged by the friendly atmosphere in lessons that allows them to share their thoughts freely and confidently. Whilst in the park, Year 1 pupils compared different animal footprints, hypothesising about which animals they belonged to.
- 3.12 Pupils develop their talents and interests well through a good range of extra-curricular activities which enriches their education and personal development. This is enhanced by the effective use of both on-site and local resources organised by the senior leaders of the school in order to make the most of the limited space. Use of nearby facilities allows pupils to further develop their skills in a suitable range of sports and in performing arts. Pupils compete regularly in hockey, football, athletics, rowing and swimming and have achieved several successes in local and national competitions. Pupils achieve very good standards in performing arts, showing much enthusiasm and enjoyment in performing regularly both at school and in external competitions.
- 3.13 Pupils of all ages show positive attitudes to their learning. They understand the importance of being involved in their lessons, and they collaborate very effectively in group work. They speak confidently about the need to practise and try hard in order to improve. Older pupils persevered in their practising of *It's a Wonderful World* and *All You Need Is Love* to perform in the whole school assembly. Children in the EYFS showed effective leadership in learning by making independent choices of activity and showing resilience when trying to put on their coats which were inside out. All parents and most pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school helps pupils to be confident and independent.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils' spiritual understanding is excellent. In discussions they show a strong awareness and understanding of different religions and their significant events and festivals. Younger pupils recalled Eid as a festival for giving, Diwali a celebration of light and Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Pupils show a mature level of aesthetic and cultural awareness through their love of performing arts, talking of how they whole-heartedly engage in musical performances and school productions. They respond well to school assemblies which provide opportunity for thinking, reflection, singing and prayer. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their appreciation for the non-material aspects of life, especially their love of the outdoors. They welcome time spent in the park, describing it as an enchanted place where they feel totally free. They express with great feeling how happy the beauty of the world and the arts make them feel. The school's leadership enhances the pupils' appreciation of the non-material world, successfully fulfilling its aim to lay the foundations for well-balanced and confident individuals who are healthy in body, mind and spirit by providing regular outdoor experiences through the bespoke woodland and adventure school curriculum and study of the creative and performing arts.
- 3.16 All pupils show an excellent level of moral understanding and behaviour. Their behaviour is exemplary, and they are invariably polite and caring towards others. Through the nurturing ethos of the school, effective pastoral care system, comprehensive personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum and high expectations of school leaders, pupils develop a real sense of what is right and wrong. They

respect the rules of the school and laws of the country. In discussion, older pupils showed understanding and appreciation of the school's encouragement for them to treat everybody with respect and kindness. They are aware that their behaviour has an impact on other people and show a keen sense of fair play. Pupils speak of challenging any misbehaviour and do not accept or expect unkindness. They are extremely tolerant of each other and empathetic.

- 3.17 Pupils' social development is excellent. They show great respect and care for all during their school day, forming positive relationships, both with their peers and with pupils in other parts of the school. In lessons, pupils collaborate well with one another and support each other working in groups, for example Nursery pupils showed excellent collaborative skills to build a road network with bends and bridges and older pupils successfully worked together to create a model medieval castle and to perform a song and dance in assembly. In all lessons seen pupils showed their understanding of the values of listening, tolerance and respect for others' thoughts and opinions. They are socially aware, work and play well together and demonstrate excellent manners, remembering to say please and thank you. This is underpinned by a foundation of taught habits and consistent expectations from staff. Pupils enjoy roles on the school council, as digital leaders and as house captains, showing effective fulfilment of their responsibilities. They show a strong awareness of the needs of others, learning about and supporting a range of local and national charities. For example, pupils have actively contributed to charitable events such as raising money for UNICEF by wearing odd socks, and by holding a tea party in aid of a local children's cancer centre.
- 3.18 Pupils' contribution to others, the school and the community is excellent. Pupils are very socially aware and contribute positively to the lives of their immediate and wider community encouraged by the family ethos of the school. Older pupils are very supportive of younger members of the school, happily holding their hands to and from assembly. The pupils show concern for looking after the world in which they live, as well as their immediate vicinity, and are proud of the school's silver level Eco status. The eco club leads the whole school in environmental action supported by all staff and the PSHE programme. For example, notices are placed around the school reminding others to switch lights off and a poster campaign requested a sustainable source for fish at school. Pupils take pride in their school environment and are willing helpers to ensure it remains comfortable and safe for all. They value the school council as it enables them to work together to achieve common goals and make a positive difference; for example, their request for cushions was met. Council members are democratically elected and speak of taking their responsibility very seriously as representatives of the pupil body.
- 3.19 Pupils' decision-making is excellent. They make sensible and thoughtful decisions and appreciate how their decisions can affect themselves and other people; this reflects their highly considerate and positive approach to others in their close school community. For example, children in EYFS shared toys and equipment willingly; they co-operated both in their classrooms and in the playground, understanding the benefit to others of doing this, for instance deciding how many layers of clothing they needed to keep warm outside. All pupils are confident in making decisions related to their well-being and safety, including online. Year 2 pupils spoke assuredly of the importance of following the rules on the computers to keep safe. In their science work Year 5 and 6 pupils decided how to explore which conditions help bacteria to grow. In discussions, pupils demonstrated their clear understanding of the importance that decisions play in their long-term success, including in gaining a place at a senior school, and in their future health and happiness.
- 3.20 Pupils develop a good level of self-confidence as they progress through the school, underpinned by its strong nurturing, family ethos. The youngest children move from one activity to another without any fuss and happily take turns without direction from the teacher. Pupils understand that in order to improve their learning and fulfil their potential they need to persevere; they talk knowingly about the need for resilience. In a junior Latin lesson, when reading from the board, all pupils demonstrated the ability to keep having a go at the pronunciation of words; all were keen to try and not afraid to make a mistake. However, in their recorded work, pupils do not always employ perseverance and sometimes

show an over-reliance on adults to guide them in their work. A small minority of pupils and a few parents in their questionnaire responses felt that pupils were not well prepared for senior school life. In discussions with pupils, they explained that until they know which school they will progress to, they cannot feel prepared. Inspectors found that the school is equipping pupils with the appropriate academic and personal skills for the next stage in their education.

- 3.21 As they go about their school days, pupils demonstrate a natural acceptance of their various backgrounds and appreciate the personal differences that make up the array of cultures in their school. In discussion, they spoke of how they value PSHE lessons and assemblies about diversity, respect and British values. This appreciation is supported by the school's leadership ensuring that pupils learn about a range of religions and cultures, and they appreciate its encouraging approach to celebrating diversity. All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people, a view that most pupils supported. Equal amounts of care, warmth, sensitivity and respect between staff and pupils were observed in the school, in keeping with its aim to embrace and celebrate individuality and creativity in a caring and safe environment, allowing each pupil to grow, achieve and foster a positive mindset.
- 3.22 In discussion, pupils showed an extremely confident awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. They are knowledgeable about the dangers of going online and what to do if they feel concerned as a result of the effective e-safety teaching that forms part of their curriculum. They know to look out for hazards in the world around them and demonstrate appropriate road safety routines as they walk to the park. Junior pupils were keen to explain that a nutritious diet with plenty of exercise and a balanced lifestyle help towards maintaining good health and wellbeing. In a PE lesson EYFS children showed awareness of the importance of warm up activities before practising sport. Pupils were pleased to point out that they eat the fruit and vegetables that are provided as part of their school meals. Most parents and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages their child to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

4. Inspection Evidence

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

Inspectors

Mrs Penelope Austin	Reporting inspector
Mrs Lieze Nice	Compliance team inspector (Human Resources Director, HMC school)
Mrs Emma Haworth	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)