



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Park School for Girls

February 2022

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School's Details

School	Park School for Girls			
DfE number	317/6061			
Registered charity number	269936			
Address	Park School for Girls 20–22 Park Avenue Ilford Essex IG1 4RS			
Telephone number	020 8554 2466			
Email address	admin@parkschool.org.uk			
Head Teacher	Mrs Catherine Redfern			
Chair of governors	Mr Sukhjit Kondel			
Age range	4 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	136			
	Prep	24	Seniors	112
Inspection dates	22 to 25 February 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Park School for Girls is an independent day school in Ilford, Essex. It comprises a co-educational prep school, which includes an EYFS setting, for pupils aged between four and eleven, and a senior school for female pupils aged between eleven and sixteen. The school was founded on its present site in east London in 1974 and is a registered non-profit-making company limited by guarantee, governed by a board of governors. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2021. The prep school became co-educational at the start of the current academic year.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers.
- 1.3 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.5 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.6 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.7 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed grades and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.
- 1.8 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school aims to foster a love of learning to produce strong, independent and enthusiastic life-long learners by nurturing self-esteem and promoting respect and consideration for others. It strives to produce reflective individuals who are thoughtful, tolerant and outward looking. The school encourages high personal standards and expectations to enable pupils to gain the best possible level of achievement and to be happy, successful and fulfilled in their future lives.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and live within a 15 mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly average. The school has identified six pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for three pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified a number of pupils as the most able in the school's population; their needs are met within the school curriculum and through additional activities.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage 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](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and 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 prep school, 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 At GCSE in the years 2019 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the prep school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical 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 proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

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

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 good.

- Pupils have excellent communication skills.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they are keen to succeed.
- Pupils have well-developed study skills.
- Pupils do not always make rapid progress including the more able pupils.
- Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are limited in range and application in some subject areas.

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

- Pupils value the Park School Way, which summarises the school's expectations and which guides their attitudes and behaviours.
- Pupils treat each other with respect and value the diverse community in the school.
- Pupils maintain positive relationships with peers and staff, reflecting the strong family ethos of the school.
- Pupils do not always display responsibility in directing their learning.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Enable all pupils to make rapid progress by ensuring lessons are engaging and provide sufficient challenge and by extending the use of target setting.
- Enable pupils to improve their ICT skills and apply these in all curriculum areas.
- Enable pupils to develop their understanding of how to improve their learning and resilience.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils make good progress, as evidenced in school assessment data, lesson observations and work scrutiny. Pupils take GCSE examinations at the end of their final year. Although the small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, results over the period 2018 to 2019 indicate that pupils made good progress and centre-assessed grades in 2020 and teacher-assessed

grades in 2021 confirm that pupils have continued to improve. The school's assessment data show pupils with SEND and EAL achieve in line with their peers as the small teaching groups allow staff to tailor the teaching to the specific needs of these pupils. Younger pupils make good progress as evidenced by the internal school assessments. Almost all children in the EYFS in the previous year achieved the expected level of development. In interview, GCSE pupils said that they have a greater understanding about their current level of attainment, which enables them to make better progress by focusing on specific aspects of their work. This is a result of the introduction of the new grading and target setting programme which is the outcome of the leadership and management review of internal assessment. Most pupils move to their first choice of sixth-form schools and colleges after completing their GCSEs at end of Year 11.

- 3.6 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a good array of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. In the prep school, pupils' good understanding of the principles of choreography such as timing, unison and canon resulted in an expressive dance with an Alice in Wonderland motif. In the senior school, pupils argued their case effectively when considering the use of the internet, by building both sides of a complex argument, utilising their strong communication skills. In modern foreign languages, pupils' high level linguistic skills were enhanced through the very effective use of the target language. Pupils' understanding is extended through their readiness to ask for clarification when they are unsure, as they feel confident to do this in their small teaching groups and through their positive relationships with staff. In questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils said that lessons were not interesting. Inspection evidence found that pupils, including the more able, made more rapid progress in lessons which were planned effectively and incorporated support and challenge for all pupils.
- 3.7 Pupils' communications skills are extremely well developed, and they greatly enjoy making presentations to their peers or to a wider audience. In a GCSE science lesson pupils delivered accurate presentations on different electromagnetic waves and responded confidently to the challenging questions posed by their teacher. In a geography lesson, younger pupils confidently used the index to read maps accurately. When preparing a radio advert for their chosen charity, pupils took turns to speak and listened carefully to the contributions of others. Pupils' written work is of a high standard as seen in work scrutiny and the well-crafted, informative scripts written by pupils for speeches given at open day events. Pupils throughout the school successfully develop their literacy skills by reading for pleasure in structured sessions in form time in the senior school, and through graded reading books in the prep school, where they are guided by their teachers.
- 3.8 Pupils are confident in applying their numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils calculated budgets without the aid of calculators in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. In science lessons pupils analysed data accurately in a project on recycling and calculated changes in mass in an experiment involving osmosis. Written work shows that pupils make strong progress in their application of numeracy across the school. In the prep school, pupils have very good understanding of numerical concepts helped by the individual attention they received and the detailed marking of the work which gives targets for improvement.
- 3.9 Pupils develop competent skills in ICT lessons and use them to prepare their own presentations and carry out independent research. In art, pupils effectively manipulated images in the preparatory work for their individual projects. In the prep school, pupils spoke enthusiastically about the extra-curricular coding club where they are able to apply and develop their ICT skills in a different context. Pupils' skills in ICT are not fully developed and their progress is limited by the tasks set and the missed opportunities for them to apply their skills across all curriculum areas. Pupils' use of the handheld devices provided by the governors was observed to be restricted in scope and pupils lacked confidence in using the software in some lessons.
- 3.10 Pupils have very strong study skills for their age. They enjoy discussion with their peers and are confident to share their opinions as they know these will be respected, in line with the school's ethos. In the prep school, pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons, listening to each other and

contributing thoughtfully. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils used a range of methods to record and discuss their personal identities leading to higher order discussions, while in a Year 5 reasoning lesson, pupils independently chose to use a thesaurus to interrogate the meaning of more complex English phrases. In a GCSE history lesson pupils were very perceptive in analysing historical sources on the reforms in Czechoslovakia and formed an accurate hypothesis based on the sources used. They were able to achieve this due to the excellent range of resources presented to the pupils and by the challenge presented by the teacher to stretch their knowledge and understanding. In science pupils effectively analysed data to consider the efficiency of different materials which allowed them to hypothesise the best materials to use for recycling.

- 3.11 Pupils enjoy success in a range of activities outside the classroom. Many spoke with enthusiasm about the regular netball fixtures, for all age groups, against other local schools. Pupils perform well in tournaments when compared with many of the larger schools they compete against and progress beyond the early rounds. Pupils look forward, with anticipation, to the resumption of tennis and athletics events in the summer term. Pupils in the prep and senior school enter national mathematics competitions with some success. Younger pupils were extremely proud to have some of their written work published in a book following their success in a creative writing competition. A group of Year 9 pupils successfully combined theory with interactive activities when they attended Royal Institute mathematics masterclasses. Pupils have been awarded the best in borough prize in the Fourth Plinth School Art Award. Pupils in the prep school are highly successful in external speech examinations while senior school pupils achieve success in external music examinations.
- 3.12 Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes to learning and are equally enthusiastic whether working collaboratively in lessons or on individual projects or extension tasks. When working in a group, pupils willingly take responsibility for directing their work and give everyone the opportunity to contribute whilst listening with respect as differing opinions are shared. Pupils readily take responsibility for directing their learning when lessons are planned to give them some autonomy. In a senior school mathematics lesson, pupils worked very effectively to solve quadratic equations independently. Collaboration in a discussion of French adjectives enabled pupils to make significant progress in their understanding in a well-resourced and carefully planned lesson.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.14 Pupils' personal development strongly reflects the ethos and values of the school in their demonstration of respect and consideration for all members of the school community. In questionnaire responses almost all parents felt that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of others. Pupils attribute their well-developed moral code to the importance placed on the Park School Way, a philosophy which guides their actions and attitudes, and they speak passionately about its expectations and its central role in the life of the school. Pupils express a genuine interest in each other's cultures and backgrounds and discuss these in an extremely mature manner. Through the annual cultural day, pupils develop further their appreciation of the traditions of other cultures especially through dress and food. Senior pupils responded thoughtfully when challenged over common stereotypes that might lead to discrimination and they identified ways in which they would respond.
- 3.15 Pupils develop good levels of confidence in themselves and show a well-considered approach as to how to improve their own learning. In interviews, pupils spoke about how the school has helped them develop greater self-knowledge and self-esteem through the individual support that teachers give them, enabling pupils to be more positive about their ability. In the prep school, pupils discussed how they personally reflect on difficult incidents including when they might apologise or approach an adult for advice. Pupils in Year 11 reflected on their personal achievements and debated essential qualities required for employment. Pupils demonstrated some responsibility for their own learning by following

the constructive comments from teachers, as evidenced in the work scrutiny. Pupils often rely on staff to direct them when faced with unfamiliar situations rather than develop their own strategies.

- 3.16 From an early age, pupils demonstrate a well-developed ability to recognise that the decisions they make will determine their future success. They make sensible behavioural choices, supported by the strong school ethos and the advice of their teachers. Pupils make mature decisions when electing their form captains, considering the characteristics required and choosing carefully who to elect. Senior house pupils, when selecting the cast for house drama, acted judiciously and ensured that all who wanted to take part would be auditioned. In GCSE art, pupils very confidently made decisions about the next stage of their coursework, understanding the impact these choices would make on the final quality of their work. When pupils are given a choice of tasks in lessons, they enjoy the responsibility and are keen to challenge themselves by not selecting the easiest option.
- 3.17 Pupils develop strongly their spiritual understanding through their friendships with others of different faiths and beliefs. In the prep school, pupils showed a mature understanding of the moral issues behind identity and proof of identity in a well-structured lesson that allowed them to explore their ideas in an open and inclusive environment. They also discussed sensitively, how people from different religious backgrounds might view moral issues. Pupils appreciate the non-material aspects of life through visits to London art galleries where they were inspired to create their own sculptures. Younger pupils wrote about the pleasure of being taken to different worlds through reading and a newsletter article revealed pupils' appreciation of nature in winter.
- 3.18 Pupils of all ages can readily and confidently distinguish between right and wrong, as reflected in the excellent behaviour seen throughout the school and underpinned by the school ethos. Pupils have a strong sense of morality, which is developed through an effective PSHE programme and the very good relationships between pupils and their teachers. On the few occasions when pupils do not treat each other with kindness, or do not take responsibility for their behaviour, the leadership is proactive in working with pupils to enable them to be more tolerant and resilient in their relationships with one another.
- 3.19 Pupils have a good level of social awareness, and they collaborate effectively in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Older pupils develop their leadership skills by organising teams for house competitions and supporting the younger ones, and pupils form positive relationships with peers in other year groups through participation in the recently enhanced programme of after school clubs. When prep school pupils disagree on what to play, they understand the need to negotiate with each other to come to an agreement. Older pupils spoke positively of their ability to resolve conflict through the use of discussion and role play, as part of an established approach which enables pupils to come together in a secure setting to explore social issues and group dynamics.
- 3.20 Across the school community, pupils demonstrate care and consideration for one another. Pupils in Year 7 formed positive relationships with Year 11 prefects when the older pupils helped with a team building event at the start of the academic year. Members of the school council are proud that they have been instrumental in instigating changes such as the re-introduction of hot lunches, changes to the school uniform and the introduction of a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, although a small minority of pupils feel that their opinions are not always listened to. Pupils develop a good awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and they raise funds for a range of charities chosen by the oldest pupils. Pupils in the prep school work together to organise regular collections for a local foodbank while older pupils use their leadership skills to organise charity coffee mornings. Pupils in the prep school developed an understanding of the issues involved for poor farmers who are supported by Fairtrade through active participation in assembly. At the start of each week, pupils in Year 11 raise awareness of a variety of topical issues by reporting on news items that they have found of interest locally, nationally or internationally.
- 3.21 Pupils of all ages know how to stay safe and understand how to be physically and mentally healthy. Pupils acquire a strong awareness of the importance of keeping active and how to look after

themselves through the effective teaching of PSHE and the provision of a good range of physical education and games activities. They develop their awareness of online safety in the discussions which take place in many subject areas including a GCSE English lesson where pupils built an effective argument about the dangers and benefits of using the internet. Pupils have developed appropriate strategies for looking after their mental health through access to a weekly drop-in session in school and the use of an online resource provided by the school. In a prep school lesson, pupils discussed maturely the advice they might give to others on the negative sides of alcohol and a poor diet. Pupils are helped to explore these issues in the safe school environment, with almost all pupils in questionnaire responses stating that they felt safe in school.

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 form meetings 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 Fiona McGill	Reporting inspector
Mrs Susan Bonell	Compliance team inspector (Former bursar, SofH school)
Mr Kevin Fear	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Andrew Gough	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)