



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Park School

February 2023

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School's Details

School	Park School		
DfE number	839/6006		
Address	Park School 43 Queens Park South Drive Bournemouth Dorset BH8 9BJ		
Telephone number	01202 396640		
Email address	office@parkschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Dowler		
Chair of proprietors	Mr John Forsyth		
Proprietor	Forfar Education Ltd		
Age range	0 to 11		
Number of pupils on roll	377		
		Nursery	92
	Lower School	110	Junior School 175
	21 to 23 February 2023		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Park School is an independent co-educational day school. Founded in 1928, it moved to its current location in Bournemouth in 1941. The school is owned by Forfar Education, whose directors provide governance. The school is organised as the Nursery for babies and children aged up to four years, the Lower School for pupils aged four to seven years and the Junior School for pupils aged seven to eleven years.
- 1.2 Since the last inspection, the school has become part of Forfar Education and the Nursery has been registered for children under the age of two. This additional nursery provision was not considered as part of this inspection and will next be inspected by Ofsted.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to enable pupils to be confident, self-reliant and respectful, aware of their own strengths and placing others' needs before their own. It aims for pupils to become resilient with positive mental attitudes, whilst showing kindness and empathy to one another. Its objective is to help each pupil fulfil their unique potential by challenging them to be ambitious in their learning.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from diverse professional family backgrounds living within a five-mile radius of the school. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is average compared to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified 22 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism, of whom 20 receive additional specialist support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Nine pupils are identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), whose needs are met within the classroom curriculum. The school provides additional enrichment activities for those pupils it identifies 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.

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 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing 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 well.
- Pupils are highly engaged, ambitious learners.
- Pupils are articulate and clear communicators.
- Pupils are extremely successful outside of the formal curriculum, in teams and individually, in art, drama, music, dance and sport.

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

- Pupils are resilient and show high levels of self-awareness in fulfilment of the school's aims.
- Pupils are highly effective when working in collaboration.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to maintain good physical and mental health.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the school.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Enable any pupils who struggle, on occasions, to successfully manage their social interactions with one another to relate more effectively with their peers.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils make strong overall progress. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is excellent. In National Curriculum assessments in 2022, nearly all pupils achieved or exceeded the expected standards in all areas, and well above the national average. These results are reflected in the school's own assessments for the years 2020 and 2021, when SATs tests did not take place due to the pandemic. In the EYFS, four-fifths of children achieved a good level of development in their Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception in 2022. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL) also make strong progress as a result of the carefully structured programme of support provided by staff. Pupils successfully gain places at academically selective maintained senior schools each year. Pupils applying to independent senior school annually have

gained scholarships for academic achievement, art, sport or music. The school meets its aim to challenge pupils to be ambitious in their learning across the broad curriculum.

- 3.6 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are consistently enthusiastic, arriving at lessons promptly and ready to learn. For example, Year 6 pupils rapidly settled into new seating positions at the start of an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, closely following the instructions of their teacher. Pupils maintain strong focus in lessons, as when Reception children were attentive and responsive throughout music whilst singing along with actions to a song. Pupils engage with interest and energy, readily offering answers to questions. They work successfully in collaboration, as when Year 4 pupils worked in groups to solve word puzzles during a registration period. Scrutiny of Year 6 pupils' work confirms that they are highly productive in lessons, completing a large volume of work across the year. Nearly all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school helps pupils to develop strong teamwork and social skills. The school enables pupils to be ambitious and resilient in fulfilment of its stated aims.
- 3.7 Pupils are highly confident and articulate communicators, both in speech and in writing. In discussions with inspectors, pupils demonstrated excellent communication skills, talking with confidence and infectious levels of enthusiasm about their work and books. They are proficient readers, with many choosing to read a range of challenging and interesting books for pleasure. They listen and respond accurately to instructions, readily seeking clarification through suitably phrased questions. For example, Year 1 pupils showed competent listening and questioning skills when discussing which foods are healthy and which are not. Pupils' writing skills are especially well-developed. Year 6 pupils' writing demonstrated imaginative use of descriptive phrasing and a rich variety of vocabulary. They show a clear understanding of the different ways to write depending on purpose. Pupils' handwriting is clearly presented, well formed, with excellent regard for the rules of grammar and punctuation.
- 3.8 Pupils are numerate, demonstrating confidence and accuracy in mathematics. They can rapidly and accurately recall number facts and show fluency in their use of the main mathematical operations. For example, Year 4 pupils demonstrated secure understanding of how to convert analogue times into the correct terminology for the 24-hour clock. These high-level skills extend across the range of numeracy topics, such as when Year 6 pupils completed finely plotted line graphs to represent data. Pupils' problem-solving skills are well developed, underpinned by a recognition of the variety of different ways to reach solutions. For example, Year 2 pupils' excellent application of their number skills enabled them to successfully solve a range of challenging number problems. Pupils successfully apply their strong mathematical skills across other areas of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils in ICT, demonstrated a well-founded understanding of percentages when adjusting programmable settings to successfully operate computer-controlled components. Year 4 pupils accurately measured and recorded the times they took to complete a range of challenging exercises in physical education.
- 3.9 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are sophisticated, supported by their curiosity and effective application of the school's enquiry led approach to learning. They have a well-developed knowledge of science. For example, Year 6 pupils' work reflected their detailed understanding of Linnaeus and the principles behind the classification of living things. Pupils have strong historical and geographical knowledge. Year 2 pupils demonstrated secure knowledge of Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions. Pupils have strong linguistic skills. Year 1 pupils' successful application of spelling rules enabled them to accurately write a range of unfamiliar words based just on their sounds. Pupils are skilful artists, showing a mature understanding for their age of line and form. For example, Year 2 pupils in art demonstrated subtle use of texture and shading to recreate the colour and tone of a seal's skin. Pupils are physically well co-ordinated, enabling successful participation in a broad range of competitive sports. Year 5 pupils in a physical education lesson, played table tennis to a level of proficiency far beyond that expected for their age.
- 3.10 Pupils have great success in their achievements outside of the formal curriculum. They participate actively in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, developing significant skills. Many of the pupils who attend karate have attained black belt status. Pupils are confident in performance, both in music

and drama, with many learning instruments and attaining well in grade examinations. Pupils are notably successful in speech and drama examinations. They sing with great success in a variety of school and local choral events, such as music festivals. Pupils have had considerable individual success in performance arts, for example acting in professional stage productions and competing at international level in ballroom dancing. In sport, school teams have achieved success in local tournaments in tag rugby, football, rounders and netball. Pupils have enjoyed considerable individual sporting success in swimming, athletics, golf, equestrianism and squash. Pupils representing the school have been regular and successful finalists in local mathematic challenge competitions against other similar schools. Pupils' art work has been selected for display in national art competitions. Pupils' high achievements in this area are strongly supported by leaders' explicit aim to nurture and enable each pupil to explore and develop their individual passions and talents.

- 3.11 Pupils are proficient users of digital technology. They make confident use of applications to support their learning across the curriculum. Year 2 pupils competently used online sources of information to undertake research into polar animals. Year 5 pupils skilfully adapted photographic images of famous people downloaded from the internet to create pop-art style posters. Pupils have well-developed coding skills. Reception children accurately guided a programmable robot around the classroom floor. Year 6 pupils adeptly coded simple instructions to control a variety of model components, such as motors and lights. Pupils' progress and experience in ICT has been significantly enhanced by the recent investment by the proprietor in new equipment and facilities.
- 3.12 Pupils have excellent study skills. Scrutiny of Year 6 pupils' work confirms that they are highly organised in the presentation and lay out of their work, for example in the arrangement of well-drawn and colourful images and succinctly written text to create menus for an Antarctic feast. Pupils demonstrate strong skills of analysis. Year 5 pupils ably deconstructed sentences in English to explain how the adverbs and adjectives were being used to enliven a description of a wolf. Year 6 pupils showed excellent skills of analysis when extracting key phrases from a short text to explore how these could be used to create suspense-filled writing. Pupils demonstrate strong higher-order thinking skills for their age, for example when Year 6 pupils successfully explored ways to connect and control different electronic components in ICT. Pupils conscientiously apply their knowledge to new situations, as when Year 2 pupils created detailed lists of the equipment they might need to take on a winter expedition.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils' self-understanding is strong for their age and abilities across the school. They show well-developed self-awareness, as when Year 4 pupils in mathematics chose extension tasks that were more challenging and appropriate to their needs. Pupils are resilient. Year 2 pupils in conversation with the inspectors, understood that persistence when correcting work helps them to make further progress. Year 1 pupils in literacy showed persistent courage by volunteering to write new words on the board, despite being uncertain of the correct spelling. Pupils are self-disciplined when moving around the site. They transition well from one lesson to the next. For example, Year 3 pupils, rapidly and without fuss, progressed from completing a task in French to starting a new task in verbal reasoning. Pupils display excellent awareness of risk for their age, as when in a beach school activity, EYFS children carefully set their own limits for how high they wanted to jump off a rock.
- 3.15 Pupils are socially aware and highly collaborative in their interactions. Year 4 pupils in personal, social and health education (PSHE) showed excellent collaborative skills when organising themselves into a husky dog team, through highly effective negotiation. Year 2 pupils in art constructively shared ideas in discussions to help them to further develop the complexity of their animal designs. Pupils readily celebrate the achievements of their peers, for example when Year 6 pupils at lunch identified the sporting talents of those sat around them, whilst remaining modest about their own achievements.

Older pupils readily offer support to younger pupils. Year 6 buddies support Reception class children at breaktimes and Year 5 reading champions support lower school pupils with their literacy. Pupils in Year 6 conscientiously fulfil their roles of house and sports captains, exhibiting well-established levels of personal responsibility.

- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate a strong awareness of the steps they need to take to stay safe and maintain good health. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated they knew how to stay safe online and inspection evidence confirms this to be the case. They understand the need to judge risk carefully, maintaining a sensible and balanced approach to personal safety. For example, Year 4 pupils in PSHE recognised in discussion that rules which may be restrictive of freedom are often in place to ensure personal safety. Pupils show a strong understanding for their age of how to maintain good mental health by being open to expressing their emotions. They readily recognise that stress is a symptom of poor mental health and are aware of possible strategies to manage it, such as spending time outdoors. They understand and are willing to seek support when it is needed, for example from the pastoral room, which they recognise as a particularly safe haven, and whose staff offer significantly caring support. Pupils understand the need for balance in their lives, recognising the value of physical activity, for example through their enthusiastic participation in the weekly mile activity and the many sporting clubs offered by the school. EYFS children demonstrate excellent awareness of the need to maintain good oral hygiene through their enthusiastic engagement with play activities, such as using the giant toothbrush.
- 3.17 Pupils make a strong contribution to the lives of others, within their school and beyond. They are highly supportive of charitable fundraising initiatives organised by the school, raising funds for local causes including the air ambulance and charities that support the homeless. They also support national charities, such as those that provide cancer care. They show strong initiative for their age in planning fundraising events for example, by arranging cake sales to raise funds for environmental causes. They are active in driving the school's response to sustainability and environmental change through the school's eco-committee, for instance by the creation of a bug hotel in the nursery. The school council, with representatives from all classes, has been successful in its campaign to increase the provision of playground toys.
- 3.18 Pupils have strong moral understanding and readily take responsibility for their own actions. Their behaviour overall, as seen in lessons, during breaktimes and at lunchtimes, is excellent across the age groups. They show a strong appreciation for rights, recognising the link between these and responsibilities and privileges. Pupils in Year 4 debated with maturity the dilemma of pet ownership and whether removing animals from the wild deprives animals of their rights. Pupils have excellent manners, responding readily and politely to requests for help from visitors. In questionnaire responses and pupil discussions, a small number of pupils and parents indicated that there are some pupils who struggle, on occasions, to successfully manage their social interactions with one another. Whilst evidence of this was not directly observed during the inspection, pupils were able to give clear accounts of the challenges some faced. It was evident that leaders are fully aware and take appropriate steps to address these isolated instances through provision of additional pastoral support for pupils when appropriate.
- 3.19 Pupils' spiritual awareness is well-developed. They are highly appreciative of the natural world, readily pausing to be still momentarily when out in the open, for example when on the beach. In discussions, pupils explained that they like to have moments of quiet contemplation, both at school and at home, recognising the importance of this to their well-being. They are emotionally mature, readily able to express their feelings, for example when Year 4 pupils described the emotional impact of a poem which made them happy. They are open and unconstrained in their emotional reactions, as when Year 6 pupils spontaneously expressed delight when they connected components in an ICT task. Pupils have strong aesthetic awareness, as seen in the excellent range of pupils' artwork on display around the school. Year 2 pupils in an art lesson astutely concluded from observations of source materials that all life is made differently and that this is worth celebrating.

- 3.20 Pupils are confident and effective decision-makers. EYFS children make excellent choices of activity in free-flow sessions, readily choosing new and personally challenging tasks. When pupils can direct their learning, they readily make interesting and stretching choices. Year 2 pupils made astute decisions about how to approach an art task, selecting individual design styles to use when drawing and shading. In discussions, pupils gave ready explanations for how they made their choices of extra-curricular activities based on their own personal interests. Year 6 pupils gave sensible and reasoned accounts of the process by which they had chosen their preferred next school.
- 3.21 Pupils show high levels of tolerance and respect. They recognise and readily acknowledge individuality, difference and diversity. For example, Year 4 pupils in PSHE demonstrated genuine understanding and respect when they stated with categoric enthusiasm that 'we must celebrate difference'. In their desire to understand, they are willing to ask searching questions, whilst recognising the need to show sensitivity to the feelings of others. They are candid in their views and open to new experiences, readily celebrating cultures different to their own. Pupils recognise the needs of their peers, and are active in ensuring everyone is included through collaboration that recognises individual strengths and needs.

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 proprietors, a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mr John Abbott	Compliance team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Sarah Gillam	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)