



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

St Piran's School

November 2022

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School's Details

School	St Piran's School		
DfE number	868/6004		
Registered charity number	309094		
Address	St Piran's School Gringer Hill Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 7LZ		
Telephone number	01628 594300		
Email address	schooloffice@stpirans.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Sebastian Sales		
Chair of governors	Mrs Kate Taylor		
Age range	2 to 11		
Number of pupils on roll	431		
	Pre-prep	215	Prep 216
Inspection dates	22 to 24 November 2022		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Piran's School is an independent co-educational day school. It traces its origins to 1805 and moved to its current location in 1872. It became a charitable trust administered by a board of governors in 1982 and fully co-educational in 1993. The school comprises two sections: Pre-Prep, which consists of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and Lower School (Years 1 and 2), and Prep, which consists of Middle School (Years 3 and 4) and Upper School (Years 5 and 6).
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headmaster, expanded Nursery provision across four classrooms and installed a new science laboratory.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to equip pupils with 21st Century learning habits within an educational programme that exceeds the National Curriculum. It aims for pupils to become motivated, engaged thinkers who experience extensive opportunities in sport, music and the arts. It seeks to provide a foundation for pupils' spiritual and moral development within a Christian ethos. The school endeavours to meet the educational needs and potential of all pupils, so that they lead enriched and fulfilling lives.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared with those who take the same tests nationally. The school has identified 57 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and other conditions, 29 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for five pupils. Two out of the five receive additional individual support with the rest supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school has identified 66 pupils across all subjects as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education, 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.
- 2.5 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 where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to

a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Pre-Prep	Nursery and Reception
Lower School	Years 1 and 2
Middle School	Years 3 and 4
Upper School	Years 5 and 6

Key findings

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

- Pupils achieve high standards across the school.
- Pupils have an excellent attitude towards their learning. They work well both independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils' communication skills are excellent. They speak articulately, debate confidently and with assurance, and apply these skills effectively across the curriculum.
- Pupils develop excellent skills, knowledge and understanding. Their speaking, listening, reading and writing are highly developed.

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

- Pupils demonstrate very high levels of self-confidence and resilience.
- Pupils social skills are excellent. From a young age they relish responsibility as pupil parliament members and other leadership roles.
- Pupils actively seek opportunities to contribute to their school and the wider community.
- Pupils have great respect for the diversity of the school community.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Ensuring all pupils develop higher-order thinking skills by leading their own learning through enquiry, exploration and debate.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Children make excellent progress in EYFS and this improves their readiness for learning in the Lower School. A large majority of pupils, of all abilities, achieve at a high standard across the curriculum. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching, including any online provision, enables their child to make progress. All of the pupils who responded agreed that their teachers know their subjects well. Pupils make rapid progress from their starting points as they move through the school. This includes those with EAL or SEND because individual education plans are in place for children who receive the school's tutor point support programme. The most able pupils make excellent progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. Over recent years an increasing proportion of these pupils are working at higher levels for their age. Older pupils successfully gained entry to the senior school of their choice, and many are offered scholarships that recognise their academic ability or talents in other areas.
- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. The vast majority of pupils show excellent levels of engagement, thinking and motivation to succeed in line with the learning habits of the school. Pupils take great pride in their work and standards of presentation are excellent across the school. They are confident to contribute ideas and happily share their existing knowledge and prior learning. Across subjects and age groups pupils display positive and excellent attitudes towards their learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils successfully applied their understanding of fractions to solve problems posed by the story *The Fraction Museum*. All pupils demonstrate that they are ready to learn. They follow instructions and move smoothly from one task to another.
- 3.7 Pupils' communication skills are excellent, with strong beginnings in the EYFS. These are developed consistently throughout their time at the school. In all subject areas pupils are very articulate. They express their own knowledge and ideas well in discussions. They are orally confident and engage in measured and sustained discussions, considering the views of adults and their classmates constructively. In recent years every pupil entered for external drama examinations has been awarded a distinction. In Year 5 drama pupils skilfully wrote and performed monologues based on characters from *Kensuke's Kingdom*. The development of early reading skills is excellent. Pupils read aloud clearly and with confidence. Year 1 pupils use phonic decoding skills to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. Reading over time, from Year 2 through to Year 6, builds fluency, motivation and enjoyment through independent reading practice. Older pupils demonstrate outstanding ability to analyse fiction and non-fiction texts in depth, assessing the effect of words and phrases on meaning. Pupils enjoy writing for pleasure and recognise the importance of language choices to add interest and variety to their finished work. Children in Nursery and Reception make excellent gains in their understanding of individual letters and sounds, such as when writing letters to Santa or writing birthday cards for their teacher. Year 3 pupils wrote convincingly using persuasive language about the benefits of visiting Mousehole. Older pupils demonstrated competence in writing for a range of genres and purposes, from biographical studies of writers and artists to persuasive writing for different audiences. They regularly apply vocabulary and sentence construction in accomplished ways.
- 3.8 In the EYFS childrens' understanding of number is excellent because individual challenges are achieved. They are keen to practise their counting skills and can count up to 30. Children also used mathematical language effectively, naming the playdough shapes that they were making. They could demonstrate an understanding of number determining if there were enough ice creams for everyone at lunchtime. From Year 1 onwards pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of mathematical concepts for their age and can apply their knowledge to problem solving opportunities. Year 2 pupils showed that they have a very secure knowledge of the properties of three-dimensional shapes, accurately describing and identifying the number of faces, vertices and edges. In Year 3 pupils develop a secure knowledge of key operations and have regular opportunities to apply their reasoning and problem solving skills. Year 5 pupils demonstrate using three different methods to solve more challenging

problems when adding fractions. Older pupils rise to deeper challenges in mathematics by striving to prove solutions that demonstrate their understanding.

- 3.9 The pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding rooted in their thirst for learning. Children in Nursery and Reception successfully develop excellent language, mathematical, social, physical and creative skills. Pupils make excellent progress in history, geography and art by exploring these subjects in meaningful contexts, such as the Year 4 Tudor workshop that took place during the inspection. Musical aptitude is nurtured and colourful displays celebrate pupils' artistic talent. An increasing number of pupils opt to have instrumental lessons and many gain examination success at merit and distinction level. Older pupils demonstrate meticulous attention to detail and use of technical skills in creative subjects. For example, they embellished personalised vinyl bags using two-dimensional design printers and textile techniques. Pupils effectively develop their knowledge and understanding of the investigative process through a range of scientific experiments. For example, Year 1 pupils make predictions about which material would be waterproof enough for the roof of the *Three Little Pigs* brick house. Year 2 pupils searched property of materials clues to generate a door code that enabled them to escape an imaginary second-hand bookshop. Year 4 pupils demonstrated an excellent ability to explain the processes of evaporation, condensation, freezing and melting whilst investigating which drinks would be bad for teeth. Year 6 pupils successfully applied their knowledge of circuits to design and make 'light up Christmas cards'.
- 3.10 Information, communication technology (ICT) skills are well developed. Pupils readily use individual devices to effectively support their learning across the curriculum. Pupils are confident with all aspects of ICT and keen to engage. In the EYFS children confidently use software programmes and headphones. Year 1 pupils demonstrate effective word processing skills to write and illustrate their own versions of familiar fairy stories. Year 5 pupils made efficient and independent use of computers to research features for their design of a new planet Mars exploration rover. Year 6 geography pupils confidently used simulation techniques to explore flood defence mechanisms. Digital pupil leaders, across all age groups, provided exactly the right level of support and instruction to enable classmates to move a cursor and drag images or text across the screen.
- 3.11 Pupils develop excellent study skills commensurate with their abilities. These are fostered from the youngest age. In the EYFS children are continuously analysing situations and hypothesising about what will happen and why. They have no fear of failure and are happy to try things out. They show resilience, determination and initiative with little support. As they mature, pupils demonstrate that they can spontaneously, gather and use information from an increasingly wide range of sources. For example, Year 4 analysed and considered the positive and negative impact of Tudor exploration; learning to read from a variety of different sources in order to answer questions. Pupils continually discuss, debate and reflect on their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils discarded original ideas for their Mars Rover design after considering facts about the surface of the planet. Pupils are actively involved in their own learning and keen to make progress. However, occasionally opportunities are sometimes missed that would allow pupils to further advance their skills of enquiry, exploration and debate. This would allow them to better prepare for future studies by taking more leadership in their own learning.
- 3.12 Pupils excel in many enjoyable events beyond their academic studies. The vast majority develop their ability to compete and refine their talents across a range of activities. They are enormously proud of classmates significant achievements such as current national biathlon champions and national prep school champions in swimming and gymnastics. They are regional winners in football and hockey. Younger pupils demonstrated a willingness to engage in new sports, such as fencing.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 The pupils' level of self-understanding is excellent. They demonstrate a high level of self-discipline, and self-awareness. From a very early age pupils are actively encouraged to challenge themselves and

move outside their comfort zone, take risks and develop independence. EYFS children confidently build bridges, pretend to be characters and explore the movement of small and large push along toys. Pupils across Years 1 to 6 sustain their efforts for long periods of time, remaining fully engaged in self-directed tasks. They are keen to improve and find individual targets set for them to be a useful tool for self-improvement. Pupils learn self-discipline by means of PSHE lessons and sporting challenges. Year 6 pupils showed resilience when they worked to transcribe the melody and rhythm of their Christmas song into more formal notation.

- 3.15 Pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility through their extensive community involvement. In the EYFS children move around the Nursery and Reception Year area calmly, sharing resources and helping each other. Relationships between pupils, staff and each other are strong, and they are quick to settle to their learning. A very large majority of parents who completed the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child develop strong teamwork and social skills. Year 1 pupils spontaneously ask each other how they have achieved special effects when using presentation software. In Year 5 mathematics pupils draw on each other's knowledge and consolidate their own learning of fractions.
- 3.16 The pupils' contribution to others, their school and the wider community is excellent. They support younger pupils, ranging from 'helpers of the day' in early years to peer mentors. Pupils from Year 3 to 6 represent their classmates as members of the pupil parliament and its sub-councils. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school teaches them how to build positive relationships. A few did not agree that pupils are kind and respect each other. However, inspection evidence from school records and pupil discussions did not support this view. Pupils raise funds and collect food to donate to local charities and foodbanks. Year 6 made individual Christmas cards for residents of a local care home. The chapel choir perform in a variety of venues, including care homes at harvest festival and Christmas. Older pupils act as excellent role models and enjoy the opportunity to take on leadership responsibilities. These roles enable pupils to embed the school's wide range of leadership habits as a preparation for the next stage of their education.
- 3.17 Pupils' respect for diversity and cultural understanding is excellent. The school has a culture of 'mutual respect'. Pupils are highly respectful of their classmates, teachers and visitors. They are inclusive, demonstrating emotional intelligence, tolerance and sensitivity towards others. They are sensitive and appreciative of the diversity within their own and wider community, taking every opportunity to learn about sharing and celebrate each other's culture and traditions. A vast number of parents who completed the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. This reflects well the school's values to be kind, respectful and inclusive. Pupils themselves have recently initiated the election of diversity leaders, challenging the school to ensure that learning resources are more representative of diversity.
- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate an excellent ability to apply their ideas and learn from their mistakes. They discuss solutions to problems with their classmates. Children in EYFS self-direct a proportion of their days. They know their learning is completely dependent on the choices they make. Year 4 chose which activities they would do during the Tudor experience day. In Year 5 PSHE pupils discussed the meaning of normal and that normality is related to individual choices, including gender recognition. Older pupils recognise that they make choices which will impact upon their future in both learning and social situations.
- 3.19 Pupils' spiritual awareness is well developed. They develop a good appreciation for their age of the non-material aspects of life through diverse opportunities for personal reflection. Children in EYFS appreciate the natural wonders from jumping in muddy puddles to the beauty of a rainbow during outdoor learning. Pupils who talked to inspectors said that attending chapel, based at the heart of the school, on a weekly basis has helped them acquire a gradually developing sense of spiritual understanding. They are thoughtful and deeply respectful of other viewpoints and beliefs. Year 6 pupils responded to the question "Is there a God?" by looking at orbital patterns of the planets, the spiral patterns in sunflowers and the arrangement of seeds in pomegranates. They concluded with their own question, "How can all this be random?"

- 3.20 Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They recognise the impact of their behaviour on others and the need to work cooperatively. An overwhelming majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school expects them to behave well, and most parents who responded said that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Although in the questionnaire a very small minority of parents disagreed that the school dealt with any bullying effectively, the vast majority of pupils expressed an opposing view. Pupils work with their teachers to write classroom rules. They know the difference between right and wrong. They behave with real understanding towards the needs of others. Pupils are very polite, welcoming and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors. Year 5 and 6 pupils who talked to inspectors said that a recent neurodiversity week had made a profound impression on them. They are reflective and demonstrate that they can regulate their own behaviours. They are open to learning from their mistakes.
- 3.21 The extent to which pupils know and understand how to stay safe and physically healthy is excellent. From an early age children recognise the need to maintain hygiene standards. Pupils across the school know about online safety and know how to stay safe when using computers. A very small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaires did not agree that the school ensures a proper level of supervision on school trips. However, all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school is a safe place to be and an overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that on school trips, staff look after pupils well. Inspection evidence, including pupils who spoke to inspectors, confirms this view. The pupils' safety council helps to identify hazards and pointed out that safety notices had not been replaced in a recently painted art room. Road safety awareness is highlighted by Year 6 who use a lollipop sign to help younger pupils cross the road, within the school grounds, for assembly. Pupils know what a healthy diet is and appreciate the variety of food on offer to them. All pupils have a detailed awareness of the value of exercise and the importance of sleep and rest. Year 5 and 6 members of the wellbeing council who talked to inspectors said they helped design the wellbeing room which helps pupils to improve their mental wellbeing. The pupil wellbeing council work with the school's 'Blaze Squad', staff trained as mental health first aiders and identifiable by rainbow lanyards, to champion wellbeing across the school.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and designated safeguarding governor, 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. 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 Desmond Dunne	Reporting inspector
Mr Richard Murray	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Naomi Fowke	Team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mrs Maxine Shaw	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)