



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**The Richard Pate School**

**March 2020**



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## School's Details

|                                  |  |    |               |     |
|----------------------------------|--|----|---------------|-----|
| <b>School</b>                    | The Richard Pate School  |    |               |     |
| <b>DfE number</b>                | 916/6039   |    |               |     |
| <b>Registered charity number</b> | 311707   |    |               |     |
| <b>Address</b>                   | The Richard Pate School<br>Southern Road<br>Leckhampton<br>Cheltenham<br>Gloucestershire<br>GL53 9RP |    |               |     |
| <b>Telephone number</b>          | 01242 522086   |    |               |     |
| <b>Email address</b>             | office@richardpate.co.uk   |    |               |     |
| <b>Headmaster</b>                | Mr Robert MacDonald  |    |               |     |
| <b>Chair of governors</b>        | Mr Guy Bradshaw  |    |               |     |
| <b>Age range</b>                 | 3 to 11  |    |               |     |
| <b>Number of pupils on roll</b>  | 296  |    |               |     |
|                                  | <b>EYFS</b>  | 59 |               |     |
|                                  | <b>Prep</b>  | 71 | <b>Junior</b> | 166 |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>          | 3 to 5 March 2020  |    |               |     |

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 The Richard Pate School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years. It is owned by Pate's Grammar School Foundation, a charity established in 1574, whose trustees provide governance. The school was founded in 1946 and moved to its current site in 1987. Since the previous inspection, a new foundation chairman has been appointed and the school has installed a synthetic sports pitch. The school is organised into three sections with the youngest pupils aged 3 to 5 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), pupils aged 5 to 7 in the prep school and pupils aged 7 to 11 in the junior school.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to offer a high-quality education, appropriate to the needs of each child, to prepare them well for the next stage in their education. It seeks to achieve this by building pupils' confidence, independence and cooperative skills within a supportive family community where each child feels valued.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 17 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and speech and language difficulties, all of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for nine pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school has identified 23 pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for seven other pupils because of their special talents in music and sport.

## 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 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 excellent.
- Pupils' excellent overall achievement represents successful fulfilment of the school's aims to educate each child to a high quality.
  - Extremely articulate pupils debate complex issues with passion and conviction.
  - Pupils' deep curiosity for the world around them and their very positive attitudes to learning, enable them to make rapid progress.
  - The high standards of pupils' art and music reflect impressive levels of creativity and skill.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils have high standards of behaviour and excellent manners.
  - Pupils' notable resilience and high self-esteem ensure they are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.
  - Pupils' excellent ability to work in collaboration with one another is underpinned by their strong and respectful relationships.
  - Pupils' less secure understanding of what a healthy diet contains is reflected in some of the snack choices they make at school.

## Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent overall outcomes, the school might wish to consider how pupils could be supported to make healthier snack choices.

## 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 attain a very high standard and make significant progress over time, as demonstrated through lesson observations, scrutiny of their work and the school's own assessment data. Children make strong progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), attaining well above national age-related expectations by the end of their Reception year. Those with SEND make significant progress and attain at least in line with national expectations and often exceed these. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) progress in line with their peers. The most able pupils attain far above expectations for their age. Annually, nearly all pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 gain places to their first choice of school, of which many are academically selective. Pupils with SEND are also successful in gaining entry to their first choice of school because of the highly effective support and individualised approach to learning. The school succeeds in its aim to prepare each child well for the next stage in their education.

- 3.6 Pupils' excellent knowledge, skills and understanding are reflected in their achievements across the curriculum supported by a broad and dynamically taught educational programme. Older pupils' understanding and engagement with scientific issues, such as the recent global viral epidemic or the fragility of the environment, are highly developed and reflect minds that are curious beyond their age. EYFS children's excellent knowledge of letters and sounds enables them to accurately say and then spell a range of words, with the most able correctly writing these words within full sentences. Pupils display secure knowledge and understanding across the humanities of geography, history and religious education since they often go well beyond the expectations set by teachers. For example, younger junior pupils demonstrated excellent knowledge about William the Conqueror and Henry I in history. Pupils' creative art work, vividly displayed around the school, demonstrates their highly developed skills which are well supported by inspirational teaching. In music, older pupils' accurate use of terminology to describe and analyse the structure of their own compositions is well above the expectations for their age and reflects teachers' high expectations and excellent level of subject expertise.
- 3.7 Pupils display excellent communication skills. They listen intently and are able to follow instructions, prompts and guidance effectively and accurately. They are highly articulate and express themselves using an extensive range of vocabulary well above the expectations for their age, as demonstrated by members of the debating club who presented the case for and against the United Kingdom leaving the European Union to a whole school assembly. Pupil's high standards of reading and comprehension are acquired from an early age as a result of carefully planned teaching about the sounds letters make and regular practice. Pupils' success is supported by a positive culture of encouragement and praise from teachers, who make the learning environment challenging, dynamic and fun. Pupils write fluently, as shown in writing by prep school pupils of vivid descriptions of George Stephenson in their work about great Victorians. These skills are successfully applied across the curriculum, for example, in geography where younger junior school pupils used rich language to vividly describe a voyage along the Firth of Forth. The pupils' excellent range of writing skills is supported not only by the high standards and expectations of the teaching staff but also by a cross-curricular approach to planning, implemented by the leadership. Pupils demonstrate confidence with learning languages where, in French for example, they achieve high standards in speaking, listening, and writing, well above the expectations for their age.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages demonstrate high levels of mathematical competence and successfully utilise their excellent calculational skills both in numeracy and across the curriculum. They take full responsibility for their learning by choosing appropriate methods and resources when solving problems and welcome the challenge of extension tasks to deepen their understanding. Pupils make rapid progress, the most able attaining far above the expectations for their age. Their excellent reasoning skills reflect mature higher order thinking and creativity when solving problems. Pupils' success is supported by trustees' investment in professional development for teachers to ensure security of learning and fluency in mathematics.
- 3.9 Pupils, including those with SEND, are highly skilled and make confident use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), using a range of applications across all curriculum areas. Pupils' proficient use of tablet computers in a dance lesson to record their performances enabled them to successfully review and improve their movement. Learning of French vocabulary by older junior pupils was effectively supported by use of a computer application to add accurate labels to historical scenes. Younger junior pupils successfully applied their coding skills to create exciting games for players to locate hidden treasure within a maze. Pupils' successful learning is enhanced by trustees' significant investment in high quality ICT resources.

- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate highly competent study skills which they apply successfully across the curriculum. Their reasoning is strong and they are able to apply new knowledge effectively and quickly. They are able to ask complex questions with a high level of confidence for their age reflecting careful attention to detail and successful critical thinking. For example, older junior pupils showed excellent questioning and deductive skills in a history lesson to hypothesise what might have caused the plague. They are enthusiastic and effective researchers who can apply their knowledge and learning with a high level of accuracy to make sensible predictions about likely outcomes. They think creatively when solving problems and successfully use mistakes in their work to further support their learning. They have good organisational skills, coming to lessons ready to learn, focused and full of enthusiasm. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school successfully helps their children to be confident, independent and develop skills for the future.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve considerable success each year. A high proportion of the oldest pupils succeed in entrance examinations to academically selective state and independent schools, and many pupils win scholarships for music, drama, art, sport and academic achievement to a range of independent day and boarding schools. Pupils are highly successful and confident performers, demonstrating their skills in a wide range of concerts and performances arranged by the school across the year. A large proportion receive individual instrumental lessons and many succeed to a high standard in external grade examinations. The junior school choir recently won their class at a local arts festival. Many pupils also participate in public speaking classes, achieving considerable success in external examinations, with the majority attaining distinctions. School teams are regularly successful in a range of local competitions including in mathematics, chess, wildlife quizzes, art competitions and debating. Pupils have been successful in local, regional and national tournaments across a variety of sports including hockey, netball, cross-country and tennis. The U11 girls' hockey team are county champions, have won a number of regional tournaments this year and achieved a high position in a recent national tournament.
- 3.12 Pupils' excellent attitudes are reflected in all aspects of their learning. They are highly curious and their effective ability to work independently enables them to take the initiative when solving problems. Often passionate and willing to go well beyond the requirements of the tasks set by teachers, they take full ownership of their learning. Pupils work very successfully in collaboration, recognising the need for flexibility when making decisions about how to proceed. This is exemplified in older junior pupils' highly organised teamwork which enabled them to construct and operate computers from a variety of components. They then successfully programmed these to operate model fairground rides that they had also constructed. Prep pupils worked together to produce excellent books about a country they had selected and researched in detail using a variety of sources including online.

## The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Resilient and self-confident in their own abilities, pupils of all ages, including those with SEND, demonstrate high levels of self-understanding. They are disciplined, both in and out of the classroom, and engage respectfully with one other and their teachers, who, by effectively modelling the school's values, offer excellent leadership. They willingly challenge themselves to try new activities, for example, when younger junior pupils attempted to scale a climbing wall for the first time. Pupils' positive mindsets enable them to recognise the potential to learn from their mistakes and find ways to improve. They are persistent, recognising that fluency comes from repetition and practice. Their strong levels of self-awareness enable pupils to judge an appropriate level of challenge when choosing tasks, recognising their own strengths and weaknesses. The oldest pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, successfully fulfilling the aims of the school.
- 3.15 Pupils of all ages are very effective decision makers, taking advantage of the frequent opportunities provided by school leaders through the curriculum and at other times to make sensible and mature choices. They have a clear understanding that decisions they make have an important impact on their success and well-being. For example, when choosing which extra-curricular activities to do at school, pupils are successful at maintaining a balance that allows them to meet the demands of a busy academic life and participate in a suitable range of activities. They are very successful in gaining improvements to the school's provision through the school council, for example, the introduction of movie nights. These changes are enabled by a culture of listening, exemplified and promoted by staff.
- 3.16 Pupils' respectful and nuanced awareness of spirituality is underpinned by their mature and aesthetic appreciation for the arts. They are supported by the high standards of their own performances in music and drama and by the richness of their experience of art. Pupils are able to explain the value of love, kindness, generosity and friendship. Through discussion they successfully wrestle with complex philosophical questions, for example, in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), younger junior pupils attempted to find ways to define beauty. They appreciate that happiness stems from having good friends and the love of family, rather than from material possessions. They take part willingly in worship and singing during school assemblies and their secure, age appropriate understanding of a variety of world religions enables them to maintain a deep respect for all, regardless of difference, belief or personal philosophy.
- 3.17 Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Almost all parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Pupils have high moral standards and understand the need to take responsibility for their own behaviour when they make mistakes. They have a deep regard for the support that staff give them, respectfully accepting the school's rules, which they agree are applied fairly. They are highly motivated to do the right thing by the rewards they receive through the house system. They engage enthusiastically in complex debates about ethical issues. For example, in religious education older junior pupils discussed with passion the rights and the wrongs of Jesus's death. Pupils have an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of public institutions supported by a range of activities including writing letters to their local member of parliament and talks given by the police.

- 3.18 Pupils' social awareness and ability to work together in lessons and around school are excellent. Their extremely positive relationships enable them to collaborate successfully in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. For example, children in the EYFS showed considerable maturity for their age by quickly and effectively organising themselves into groups to undertake tasks during a literacy lesson. Pupils recognise the importance of giving to those who are less fortunate than themselves, by nominating and then electing the charities for which they wish to fundraise. During a recent charity day, pupils successfully raised a significant amount of money for three charities, also taking responsibility for setting up and supervising all the activities. Pupils understand the benefits of teamwork, are quick to recognise each other's successes and to offer help and encouragement where needed. For example, during preparations for the school play, older pupils offered each other congratulations when they found out which parts they had been given. Pupils' success in sport is supported by their strong team spirit and determination to do their best for each other.
- 3.19 Pupils make a significant contribution to the life of the school, which is reflected in their strong friendships and successful fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities. They give compassionate and effective support to younger pupils, willingly help their teachers, and are keen to ensure visitors feel welcome and know where to go. They understand the need to show sensitivity when others ask for help, supporting them with the minimum of fuss. Pupils, who have ongoing medical needs, are able to give moving examples of the excellent and caring support they have received from peers.
- 3.20 Pupils show excellent levels of respect, and all, including those from ethnic minorities, with SEND and EAL, indicate that they feel accepted and valued by their peers. They both recognise and value their differences, enabling them to maintain positive and harmonious relationships throughout the school. Older junior pupils described how helpful it was when making props for the school play that one of them was sufficiently tall to hold a prop up whilst the others painted it. Almost all parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.21 Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. EYFS children's secure understanding of the importance of hygiene is successfully communicated to the school community through their informative posters about the correct procedure for hand washing. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of personal safety, a clear understanding of the boundaries within school and what to do in an emergency. They have a detailed awareness of how to stay safe online, supported by the school's curriculum in ICT and leaders' provision of regular workshops, and they are able to talk confidently about the steps they would take if they encountered problems. Pupils' understanding of the importance of a balanced diet is less secure, as demonstrated at breaktimes when many choose less healthy snacks from the available options. Pupils' willingness to be open when they experience problems, within a school culture that encourages honesty and frankness, helps them to maintain their strong mental well-being and develop resilience. They have high levels of physical fitness actively participating in the many sporting opportunities made available to them.

## 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 trustees, observed 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. 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

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Mr Matthew Lovett  | Reporting inspector                            |
| Mrs Diana Robinson | Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school) |
| Mrs Julia Langford | Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)             |