

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Holy Cross Preparatory School

May 2019



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School's Details

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Holy Cross is a Roman Catholic day school for girls aged between four and eleven years. The youngest pupils including children in the Reception class, children aged four in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and those aged up to seven years, are educated in a modern wing. Pupils aged eight to eleven years are housed in the main house. The school is owned by the trustees of the Sisters of the Holy Cross who are the founders and proprietors responsible for the governance of the school. They appoint members of an advisory body who provide advice and guidance to them and the school leadership team.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1931 and moved to its present site in 1971. It is located in an historic house with eight acres of ground in a conservation area on Kingston Hill in south west London.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has installed a flood-lit sports pitch, an all-weather pitch and a sports pavilion.

What the school seeks to do

1.4 The school aims to enable each person to grow in Christian maturity, and have the opportunity for self-growth whilst developing confidence, maturity and a love of learning. It aims to develop a strong sense of responsibility, co-operation and tolerance based on an awareness of others and an understanding of the need for charitable work.

About the pupils

1.5 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 25 pupils as having special education needs and/or disabilities, which includes dyslexia and language difficulties. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 54 pupils, the majority of whom are fluent users of English. The school has identified 55 pupils as being the more able or talented. The curriculum is modified for them with differentiated activities. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and live within a five-mile radius of the school.

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. 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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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: <u>The Education (Independent School</u> <u>Standards) Regulations 2014; Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework</u>.

Key findings

2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, 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 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. These include 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 pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include 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 of all ages and abilities achieve exceptionally high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.
 - Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They show extremely high levels of perseverance and commitment in lessons and collaborate most effectively.
 - Pupils are excellent communicators and can speak articulately, confidently, informatively and passionately about their learning.
 - Pupils ICT skills are developed at a rapid rate and even the youngest pupils benefit greatly from the opportunities to use computers and achieve high standards when doing so.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils have an excellent knowledge of their own and other people's faiths and extremely high levels of spirituality across all areas and ages of the school.
 - Pupils' levels of moral understanding are particularly high. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and know how their behaviour affects others.
 - Pupils show great respect and tolerance, and show strong cultural understanding. They appreciate fully all members of their community.
 - Pupils embrace responsibilities from an early age with enthusiasm and a high level of understanding of what this requires.
 - From an early age, pupils make informed decisions and can be relied upon to make the most appropriate choices.

Recommendations

- 3.3 In the context of these excellent outcomes, the school is recommended to:
 - Ensure that the social and physical development of all pupils is fully developed by extending the curricular and extra-curricular programme for all abilities.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils attain high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum through teaching that utilises strong subject knowledge. Pupils' rapid development of higher-order thinking skills is helped by the open-ended questioning in lessons by staff. Throughout the school, pupils work enthusiastically in pairs, small groups and individually to achieve high-quality end results. Pupils can hypothesise effectively and informatively, and are able to test for themselves and then synthesise the information with high levels of informed understanding. This was seen in an upper school science lesson where pupils made a variety of circuits using well-chosen resources and predicted the outcomes regarding whether or not they would conduct electricity and recorded their results with understanding. Pupils use ambitious and extended literary terminology to analyse and write poetry and text, including the use of metaphor, alliteration, enjambment and personification. Pupils in Year 3 are able to calculate the area and perimeter of rectilinear shapes by using their reasoning to divide them first into regular shapes by carefully measuring the sides. In discussion, pupils demonstrated their ability to transfer skills from one subject to another and explained in detail how mathematics and English are used in other subjects. Some pupils' physical development is not always met and pupils

and parents in the questionnaire and pupils in conversation spoke about not being included in team activities and not getting the opportunity to be fully involved. Pupils' achievements are reflected in positive and informative reports to parents where next steps for progress are outlined clearly.

- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent. They display extremely high levels of perseverance and commitment in lessons. They collaborate well and are co-operative and highly competent learners who seek help from their peers with confidence. They are eager to learn and use initiative to make independent progress and take responsibility for their own learning from an early age. This was seen in a science lesson where pupils interacted well to create an experiment allowing them to discover the habitat preferences of a woodlouse. They regularly show initiative and make independent decisions as seen in a drama lesson during which pupils assimilated excellent direction and then applied it to their own performance. Pupils love learning and benefit greatly by developing a full range of personal skills through the school's programme to promote and build learning powers. Pupils show a thirst for knowledge and an ambition to achieve at the highest possible level. They work conscientiously, displaying determination and resilience. In an English lesson, pupils improved their work through correcting their mistakes and commenting and evaluating effectively on how challenging they found the lesson. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and see this as part of the learning process. Pupils work positively together to produce the desired outcomes in their academic studies, sport, music, art and drama.
- 3.7 Pupils display excellent communication skills. They are assured, articulate and confident speakers who do so with clarity and understanding. They are attentive listeners to teachers and their peers. Pupils read with high levels of confidence and expression; they convey meaning when reading aloud as seen in an English lesson where pupils read text in order to understand how to provoke a reaction in the reader and then applied it to their written work. Pupils' written work is of an excellent quality and they display the ability to write for a range of audiences and in a variety of styles, of which they have a heightened understanding. At all ages, pupils take great pride in their work and present it neatly and legibly with accurate use of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is aided by the consistent use of approaches by the staff with exemplars displayed in the classrooms. Across the school, pupils achieve excellent levels of numeracy as seen in a mathematics lesson where they showed clear understanding of the function of Venn diagrams when sorting multiples and factors. They apply excellent mathematical knowledge and skills independently, confidently and successfully to investigative and statistical work in other subjects such as science and computing. In numeracy pupils make appropriate and often good progress for their age due to the approach to mathematics, which ensures each year group is continually challenged and pupils' learning extended, with new work that builds on previous skills acquired. There has been a positive effect on learning due to the purchase of a new maths scheme agreed by the governance of the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils are highly competent mathematicians and are achieving the results appropriate to their abilities. Pupils are able to make cross-curricular links with understanding and view mathematics as an important life skill.
- 3.8 Competence in information and communication technology (ICT) is a great strength in the pupils. They develop in this subject at a very fast rate and benefit greatly from the excellent teaching and facilities. Pupils have excellent skills and can produce posters, fliers, fact files, information sheets and I-movies. They achieve well when undertaking personal research and, in the upper part of the school, their learning and progress are accelerated by the provision of individual devices. Pupils show high levels of digital literacy and are able to choose appropriately the most suitable IT medium to support them in the presentation of their work. A coding lesson showed how successfully pupils can apply logic and reasoning to give effective commands to move an object in a random direction between two angles on the computer. In Reception, children used the computer to produce a picture and write their names independently.

- 3.9 Pupils make excellent academic progress and use their time profitably and productively. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most of the pupils agreed they are encouraged to think and learn for themselves and an overwhelming majority agreed that the teachers help them to learn and make progress. The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their children to make progress and develop skills for the future. Pupils' success owes much to the excellent tracking and monitoring and the highly effective use of information from academic assessments to inform teaching strategies and give appropriate guidance to pupils as to the next stages of learning. The excellent range and quality of resources in all parts of the school allow pupils to develop a full range of manipulative, experimental and discovery skills. In the EYFS, children make excellent progress and develop a range of skills both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils with SEND or EAL make excellent progress, as seen in the work scrutiny and in lessons where well-planned activities ensured all pupils were encouraged to achieve the learning objectives. They are extremely well supported in class by high-quality specialist help and teaching assistants who offer well-focused and timely actions to support individual pupils. The excellent progress that the pupils make is in accordance with the school's stated aim to develop each child's confidence, maturity and life-long enjoyment and love of learning and to prepare children for senior school entry within a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils' subject knowledge is extensive and they benefit greatly from the specialised subject teaching and the grouping of classes, in some subjects, by prior achievement. Pupils take advantage of all opportunities to improve with great enthusiasm as shown in Reception where they answered the register in a variety of different languages and in a PE lesson where the youngest children applied a wide range of skills and effectively learned how to throw a foam javelin. Pupils develop excellent life skills and know how to apply them due to the programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme.
- 3.10 The school does not enter pupils for National Curriculum tests but, on the evidence available, attainment is judged to be above average in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence from the observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils supports this judgement. Pupils leaving the school at Year 6 gain places at their chosen senior schools, with a large number being awarded a range of scholarships. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows evidence of excellent progress over time with the accumulation of new skills and knowledge. More able pupils respond with confidence and accuracy to the challenging work in class and take advantage of the worked matched to their needs thus making progress in line with their potential.
- 3.11 Pupils benefit from the extra-curricular programme provided by the school as they develop team spirit, co-operation skills and an appreciation of their own and other pupils' strengths and talents. A few parents, in their response to the questionnaire, felt there were not enough suitable activities for sporting pursuits and more competitive activities. The inspection evidence shows there is a suitable range available including: science-related clubs, speech, drama and ballet. The pupils enjoy the opportunity to be involved in the sport, music and drama departments' activities and performances. They enjoy taking part in activities outside of school such as singing for the local old people and playing for local sports' clubs. Pupils display a positive and spirited attitude in all they do.

The quality of pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils' levels of spiritual understanding are extremely high across all ages of the school. In discussions, they speak with pride and affection about the gospel values and the Holy Cross Way and about the positive contribution the school makes to helping them achieve a balanced and spiritual outlook on life. This was seen in a highly moving and accomplished assembly taken by Reception pupils where older pupils listened attentively and all joined in with the prayer and the singing enthusiastically, but poignantly. Pupils talk thoughtfully about the non-material aspects of life and they utilise fully the numerous opportunities for reflection, prayer and quiet thought through writing their own liturgies, taking part in class assemblies and from the times when they can sit and appreciate a piece of music or a painting. The governance of the school has been instrumental in providing these opportunities by developing a much appreciated and well-used prayer room, which offers a contemplative area where pupils go and can be reflective. In the governance interview it was discussed with great passion and empathy for the pupils' needs. The pupils have a deep understanding of the Catholic Christian ethos which underpins all they do and assists them to be a caring school community and within the wider world. The pupils know the value of charitable giving and this is seen in their support of a sister school in Zambia and the pupils stating in interview about the donation of books and other resources.
- 3.14 Pupils' levels of moral understanding are extremely high. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and know how their behaviour affects others. In their questionnaire responses almost all parents and all pupils agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Inspection evidence wholly supports this view. They talk emphatically about the lack of bullying or serious bad behaviour. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly and courteously around the school and their classroom behaviour is exemplary, giving them great opportunities for productive study. Pupils understand the school and classroom rules as well as appreciating the needs of others. They show respect for the Holy Cross Way and have high moral standards. Pupils work well together to achieve common goals. They solve problems very effectively and are socially very aware of other people and their feelings. They work collaboratively and this is a highly valued cornerstone of the teaching and learning ethos of the school. They work extremely effectively to build confidence and deepen their understanding before contributing to discussions. In some pupils team-work is less well-developed due to their lack of involvement in team sports at a high level, this prevents them from developing the related skills. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions systems and appreciate that there is a much greater emphasis on the positive with credits given regularly to all age groups. In interview, pupils spoke about a caring community in which everyone shows a genuine concern for each other. As one younger pupil said, if you do something bad you go to the cloud, but if you do good you go over the rainbow!
- 3.15 Pupils benefit from an early age from the opportunities to make appropriate decisions. They make sensible and thoughtful decisions, always with consideration for the effects on themselves and other people, showing them to be reflective and highly self-aware. They involve themselves fully in the democratic process with enthusiasm and a sense of importance; when voting for house captains and the charities for which funds are raised. They competently organise themselves in a variety of tasks and effectively select the most appropriate resources as seen in Reception during a child-initiated session where children shared willingly and co-operatively. They make informed decisions and can be relied upon to make the appropriate choices in their academic studies which will challenge them and allow them to make further progress. They chose from a range of challenges in lessons with courage and a clear understanding of their abilities. Pupils are encouraged to voice their thoughts and opinions and do so tactfully but emphatically. They are confident that they are listened to and members of the school council believe they can and do bring about change. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and discuss them confidently with staff and then decide how to correct them and put things right. This gives the pupils greater self-belief as they learn how to accept errors as part of their personal development. In interview, the younger pupils said that by encouraging us to make choices, we make good ones and the best choice is to be kind not mean.

- 3.16 Pupils show great respect for other members of the school community and the staff provides excellent role-models. Pupils have a clear understanding of cultural differences and celebrate them with great joy and thoughtfulness. They show impressive levels of tolerance and sensitivity to those from different faiths or cultural backgrounds and they talk openly about respecting difference and accepting people for who they really are. The school encourages the integration of a variety of cultures and pupils speak warmly of visitors coming to school to talk about their way of life, festivals, food and traditions. An overwhelming majority of parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire acknowledged that the school encourages them to respect other people and that the school promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. A small minority of pupils disagreed that the school does not show any favouritism or treats pupils unfairly because of our faith, race or needs. During the inspection, no evidence was found to substantiate these comments and, in interview, the vast majority of pupils spoke extremely positively about how everyone is treated fairly.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to others, the school and the community and they develop 3.17 respect and an appreciation for the many opportunities for leadership and service. They appreciate how other people feel and act with a great sense of empathy. They embrace responsibilities from an early age with enthusiasm and a high level of understanding. Pupils speak highly and affectionately of the big girl/little girl practice by which older pupils take responsibility for those younger and provide positive role-models, while also being aware of the social needs of the youngest pupils. Pupils enjoy the classroom responsibilities and the opportunity to be house captains and lead other pupils in events such as sports day. They express themselves clearly about the value of having responsibility and understand the process of elections for these positions. Pupils think carefully about the choices they make and acknowledge the strengths and personal characteristics of their peers. They show excellent personal development in their ability to apply selection criteria wisely and without bias. They care for those in the wider community and have a well-developed sense of those less fortunate than themselves through supporting a number of charities. Pupils are actively engaged in selecting the charities they support and they talk animatedly about organising events to raise funds. From a young age, pupils are made aware of the environment and they appreciate the need to protect it, both at school and worldwide.
- 3.18 Pupils develop excellent levels of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline and resilience. They know how to improve their own learning and performance and set high targets which they invariably achieve, especially when the marking is constructive and gives clear next steps. They are less able to do this when the marking is simply congratulatory in style. In response to the questionnaire, a few pupils disagreed that feedback and marking help them to improve, although a very large majority agreed that the school helps them to think and learn for themselves. They have a very positive understanding of themselves and conduct themselves appropriately. They initiate conversations with visitors with ease and converse on an equal level with each other and adults. They persevere with tasks and are not afraid to take risks, as seen with the younger pupils using their different language skills to respond in class. They are extremely well-prepared with skills to allow them to move through their school life and on into successful careers.
- 3.19 Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe in all its forms is highly developed. Their personal development ensures they know how to look after their bodies and their minds. The vast majority of pupils and parents who responded to the questionnaire confirmed that the school keeps them safe. In interview, pupils confirmed that they are given regular advice about online safety and the dangers of social media. They have a clear understanding of healthy diet and healthy living and an appreciation of the effects healthy eating, exercise and a balanced lifestyle have on their lives. They choose wisely at lunch times and pupils spoke enthusiastically and knowledgeably about having a rainbow plate in order to have all the correct food groups and a balanced meal. Lunches were found to be sufficient in quantity and of a high quality with all dietary needs catered for and salad and fresh fruit available.

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 the chair of trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assembly. Inspectors visited 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 Paul Easterbrook	Reporting inspector
Mrs Angela Russell	Compliance team inspector and team inspector (former head of Pre-Prep IAPS school)
Miss Sarah Menegaz	Team inspector (deputy head IAPS school)