



ISI

Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

St Joseph's School

December 2022

Contents

Contents	2
School's Details	3
1. Background Information	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection	5
Preface	5
Key findings	6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	7
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	7
3. Educational Quality Inspection	8
Preface	8
Recommendation(s)	8
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements	8
The quality of the pupils' personal development	10
4. Inspection Evidence	13

School's Details

School	St Joseph's School			
DfE number	908/6040			
Registered charity number	289048			
Address	St Joseph's School St Stephen's Hill Launceston Cornwall PL15 8HN			
Telephone number	01566 772580			
Email address	reception@stjosephscornwall.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Oliver Scott			
Chair of governors	Mrs Elisabeth Mann			
Age range	4 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	246			
	EYFS	10	Juniors	94
	Seniors	142		
Inspection dates	6 to 8 December 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 St Joseph's School, Launceston is an independent co-educational day school. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. It was founded in the early 1900s by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and later the Dominican Order. In 1984 it became an independent charity, with a lay head teacher. Since the previous inspection, school developments include new classrooms, a gym, an expanded dining room, improved music facilities, an outdoor classroom, new changing rooms, the construction of a terrace and play areas and upgrades to the main building. The school is comprised of a junior and a senior department. The junior school includes Reception as Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 to 6. The senior school includes Years 7 to 11.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to nurture every child as an individual and enable them to reach their full potential in a secure and positive environment. It aims to give equal value to academic and non-academic achievement through teaching that fosters a love of learning. Pupils are supported to become confident, competent individuals, ready to face the adult world.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional, business and farming backgrounds. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly in line with the average for others taking the same test nationally. The school has identified 35 pupils as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), 23 of whom receive support for a range of identified needs. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive additional support. The school has identified 66 pupils as being either most able or talented, and the curriculum is appropriately 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 In the junior school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2018 to 2022, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- Pupils are highly enthusiastic learners, keen to fulfil their potential.
- Pupils' study skills are extremely well developed, allowing them to become confident independent learners.
- Pupils' communication skills are highly developed and their oral communication is notably strong.

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

- Pupils have highly developed levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and perseverance.
- Pupils collaborate extremely well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils have a strong sense of moral understanding; they readily take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils' contributions to others, to the school and the community are excellent.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Fully embed the school's recent marking and assessment initiatives to ensure that all pupils benefit from constructive written feedback to support their progress.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Throughout the school pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, develop excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding for their abilities across the curriculum. Reception pupils make rapid progress in their recognition of letters and sounds in their daily phonics lesson, some writing sentences independently. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils clearly and confidently explained to each other how they solve calculations with different types of fractions, showing excellent command of the methods used. Pupils' good creative work is manifest through many examples of eye-catching art displayed around the school. Scrutiny of Year 6 artwork included striking portraits of Queen Elizabeth using different media, accompanied by reflective commentary. In a religion and world views lesson in Year 7, pupils showed excellent appreciation of biblical metaphorical language associated with Jesus and could explain clearly how it affects the reader's understanding of His role in Christians' lives. Pupils throughout the school are excellent collaborative learners. In a biology lesson in Year 10 pupils worked together enthusiastically on a photosynthesis experiment using Canadian

pondweed, using excellent reasoning skills to discuss reaction rates. Year 9 pupils made use of a very high level of previous learning in a history lesson, working together to explain and illustrate many of the causes of the Russian Revolution. Whilst a small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they did not find the lessons interesting, all those spoken to during the inspection thought that lessons are engaging and enjoyable. This concurs with inspectors' observations. In contrast, in the questionnaire, pupils are overwhelmingly appreciative of the supportive teaching they receive, including in SEND lessons, whilst a very large majority of pupils declared that their teachers know their subjects well. Inspection evidence supports this view. In discussion with inspectors, pupils spoke highly of enthusiastic teaching, and lessons made enjoyable through a wide range of activities. They also value the individual attention they receive in small classes and their teachers' desire to help them succeed. A few pupils replying to the questionnaires said that marking did not help them improve their work. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows an inconsistency in the use of the school's recent marking and assessment initiatives. This results in written work showing uneven progress across different subject areas. Outside the classroom, younger pupils demonstrated excellent ball skills in their games lessons, making rapid progress due to appropriately challenging activities. Pupils demonstrated confident performance skills in a junior play rehearsal and Year 1 pupils displayed excellent choral speaking skills when expressively reciting a Christmas poem.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment is strong in relation to their ability throughout the school. This includes those with SEND and EAL. They make excellent progress in their academic work as evidenced by the school's robust tracking systems, internal assessments, and scrutiny of their written work. In discussion, pupils described the benefit to their progress of the sharing of academic data, of regular feedback, and appropriately aspirational targets. Data analysed show that in recent years the very large majority of pupils have achieved higher GCSE grades than would be expected from their starting points, and well above the national average for maintained schools at GCSE. This correlates with inspectors' observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Supported by the governing body, a major contribution to pupils' considerable academic development is through the leadership team's promotion of thorough planning, high-quality teaching, and use of informed strategies to support individual pupils. Almost all pupils move on to their first choices for post-16 education. Data shows that attainment in the junior school, including in the EYFS, is above the national average for maintained schools, with no significant difference between groups of pupils. Again, this correlates with inspection evidence.
- 3.7 Pupils' communication skills are highly developed and their speaking skills are notably strong. In interviews with inspectors, they showed themselves to be thoughtful and articulate, confident orally and attentive listeners. Scrutiny of their written work demonstrates that they are able to adapt their writing style appropriately for different tasks. Because opportunities for discussion in lessons are included as a matter of course, pupils become increasingly confident in voicing their ideas and opinions, learning to endorse them with well-chosen examples. In small groups they listen to and question each other's ideas respectfully, organising tasks to best suit their individual strengths. In an English lesson in Year 8, pupils reflected in pairs on their recent examination answers, including detailed analysis on how they could improve their writing skills. Younger pupils demonstrate extremely well-developed reading skills for their age. They can work out how to say words that they do not immediately recognise, and their skills of inference are strong. Through their reading journal records, and in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils demonstrated excellent predictive and thinking skills as they analysed the novel *War Horse*.
- 3.8 Overall, the pupils' numeracy skills are good and some pupils produce work of an excellent standard. They are suitably stretched by their teachers and very well guided, when necessary, by excellent use of teaching assistants. In a mathematics lesson in Year 10, pupils displayed secure numeracy skills in factoring algebraic questions, whilst those in a Year 11 mathematics lesson made excellent progress in their ability to transform an equation into a graph. Year 4 pupils made rapid progress in their development of decomposition skills, also proffering alternative ways in which to subtract. Scrutiny of

pupils' work showed that they apply their numeracy skills successfully across the curriculum, especially in design and technology, engineering, food technology and the sciences.

- 3.9 Pupils are competent users of information and communication technology (ICT). In the junior school they develop their skills from an early age through classroom mobile devices and discrete ICT lessons. Supported by the governing body's decision to ensure that all senior pupils are allocated their own tablets, pupils learn to use these appropriately and independently, adept at managing a curriculum wide variety of online learning platforms, applications and electronic resources. In a GCSE design technology lesson, pupils used ICT to give presentations of their home working design projects. Year 7 pupils spoke enthusiastically about making a short film about a super-villain, explaining the editing process knowledgeably. In the junior school, pupils' use of ICT is appropriate for their age. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used a publishing application with confidence to produce Christmas card designs. Pupils across the school regularly use ICT to good effect to support more traditional skills and methods of learning, for example, to access collaborative learning tasks.
- 3.10 Pupils' study skills are extremely well-developed, allowing them to become confident independent learners. Younger pupils are given many opportunities to respond to open-ended questions and develop quickly their thinking skills across the curriculum. In a Year 6 science experiment to investigate the size of shadows, pupils formulated their own enquiry question and, following the experiment, drew sensible conclusions. In discussion with inspectors, older pupils highlighted the usefulness of the Years 7 and 8 study skills programmes in which they learn strategies to support successful independent learning. In a Year 10 history lesson, pupils used higher-order thinking skills as a matter of course, demonstrating excellent ability to analyse, hypothesise and synthesise. They drew upon a wide range of resources to explain how events in 1920 undermined the early democracy of the Weimar Republic, supported by the skilful use of questioning to further develop their ideas.
- 3.11 Pupils relish opportunities to take part in a wide variety of academic and other activities. Individuals and teams are particularly successful at national and area level competitions include swimming, equestrian, cross country, gymnastics, netball and football. A varied weekly extra-curricular programme is provided by the school and pupils are most appreciative of all that is on offer. Some individuals achieve highly by being able to focus on particular talents through modification of the curriculum. Examples include inclusion in county cricket development squads, English Youth Ballet, and academy level football. Each year, pupils successfully complete the nearby Ten Tors challenge. They also enjoy success in local arts festivals. Pupils who enrol in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) appreciate the volunteering opportunities afforded through this award.
- 3.12 Pupils are highly enthusiastic learners, fully focused and keen to fulfil their potential at every stage of their school life. They respond extremely well to challenge, showing effort and enthusiasm, and work willingly with each other as they seek to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. In a Year 8 English lesson, pupils demonstrated excellent collaborative learning skills when exploring how literary techniques are used to make the reader feel emotional. Encouraged by teaching which provides appropriate challenge for all abilities, pupils persevere to become successful independent learners.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate very strong levels of self-knowledge and self-discipline seen through the quality of their discussion with inspectors, their contributions in class, and in extra-curricular activities. In this way the school very successfully fulfils its aim for pupils to become confident, competent individuals, ready to face the adult world. They show resilience and are appreciative of their teachers' encouragement and support, using this as a motivating force for further progress. Helped by end of year transition lessons as they move from one section of the school to the next, most pupils feel well

prepared for and confident about the next stage of their education. Pupils respond positively to the encouragement to self-reflect in PSHE lessons, in form time and in assemblies.

- 3.15 From an early age, pupils are nurtured to make good decisions which affect their learning and relationships and appreciate that the decisions they make will impact their success and well-being. Year 1 pupils can explain what it means to be on the 'think again cloud' in order to reflect on poor behaviour choices and decide how best to move forward with help from their teachers. Older pupils are clear about the importance of considering their academic options carefully as they move into the GCSE years. Pupils relish opportunities given to take responsibility for their decision making in all areas of school life. In discussions with inspectors, they said that they are not scared to make decisions as this is the culture fostered throughout the school.
- 3.16 Whilst this aspect is not as well-developed as others, pupils develop a keen appreciation of the non-material aspects of life through the PSHE curriculum, team events, and creative activities such as art, drama and music. The joy emanating from the junior pupils as they performed in their Christmas production of Robin Hood was palpable. All pupils develop a strong awareness of their rural environment; Year 5 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their love of the outdoors and their regular nature walks to the school's orchard area. Older pupils spoke of the importance of being able to access a variety of quiet spaces for reflection. The high value they place on good relationships within the school community underlines the importance of feelings and emotions.
- 3.17 Pupils have a highly developed sense of moral understanding; they take responsibility for their own behaviour and readily embrace the school motto of, 'Care, Compassion and Community'. They are considerate towards each other, irrespective of gender or the relevant protected characteristics and are generous in their praise of their peers' successes. This is reflected in the pupils' questionnaire responses, in which a very large majority agreed that pupils are kind and respect one another. In Year 11 form time, pupils volunteered to look after the youngest children during the whole school end of term Santa charity run through the town, appreciating that "it's not about who comes first". They believe that everyone deserves to be treated kindly, and acknowledge that learning from one's mistakes is a strength.
- 3.18 Pupils form positive relationships with each other and work most effectively together, both in and out of the classroom. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Inspection evidence supports this view. In after-school clubs, pupils socialised extremely well, co-operating and supporting each other whilst having fun. Carefully planned lessons allow regular opportunities for pupils to develop their collaborative skills; they are quick to acknowledge the benefits, recognising that this leads to more in-depth knowledge. The house system very successfully allows pupils to further develop their excellent team skills.
- 3.19 Throughout the school, pupils' contributions to others, to the school and the community are good, and very occasionally excellent. They relish the responsibilities they are given within the prefect body and are also keen to contribute to the school community through the senior and junior school councils, knowing that the senior management team and governing body will consider carefully ideas for the improvement of all pupils' school experience. Pupils' effective petitioning has resulted in recent changes in the school's dress code, the introduction of CCTV to protect their property, a wider range of healthy food, and curriculum adaptations. Within the local community, pupils help at a food bank, organise concerts care home residents, take part in a reading scheme for the isolated elderly and fundraise for a variety of charities. At the town's Christmas tree festival, Year 6 pupils decorated the school's tree with ethnically diverse angels made from recycled material.
- 3.20 Pupils respect diversity and value the school's culture which encourages open-minded attitudes towards all those with protected characteristics. Pupils who have recently arrived from overseas speak warmly about how quickly they have been made to feel at home within the school community. In discussion, pupils showed a clear respect for differences in others, showing sensitivity to people's

feelings. They are aware that their community is not as diverse as many, and are keen to learn about and explore others' ways of life. They welcome the opportunities the curriculum offers for exposure to other cultures through literature, music, geography and modern foreign languages, for example, as well as through lessons celebrating Black History Month. Pupils speak highly of the Year 9 cultural awareness curriculum, recognising the need to learn about communities other than their own.

- 3.21 Pupils of all ages have a strong understanding of how to stay safe, including online. They are able to explain with confidence the importance of good physical and mental health. The PSHE curriculum allows pupils to develop an excellent understanding of topics as diverse as healthy eating, time management, the use of social media, and respectful relationships. They fully appreciate the value of remaining healthy, both physically and mentally, to their overall well-being. Pupils throughout the school agree that talking about problems is important and that there are plenty of staff to whom they can turn if they have concerns.

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 safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. 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

Mrs Sarah Dawson	Reporting inspector
Mr David Williams	Compliance team inspector (Former director of estates & compliance, IAPS school)
Miss Joanna Gay	Team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school)