



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Vita et Pax Preparatory School**

**March 2020**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Vita et Pax Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	308/6056			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	281566			
<b>Address</b>	Vita et Pax Preparatory School 6a Priory Close Green Road Southgate London N14 4 AT			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 84498336			
<b>Email address</b>	head@vitaetpax.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Allana Gay			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Anna Westcott			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	109			
	<b>EYFS</b>	14	<b>Juniors</b>	95
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3 to 5 March 2020			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Vita et Pax Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years. Founded in 1936 by Benedictine Olivetian sisters, it moved to its current site in 1966. The school has charitable status and is governed by a council of management.
- 1.2 The school comprises an Infants department, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and a junior department. The current head teacher was appointed in September 2019.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to deliver a child-centred approach within a supportive environment which nurtures the unique character of each pupil. It seeks to work in strong partnership with parents to ensure pupils are safe, academically confident and well cared for physically, socially and emotionally.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from predominantly professional and small business families, from a range of ethnic backgrounds representing a corresponding diversity of faiths and denominations. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include hearing impairment, autism and dyslexia, one of whom receives additional specialist support, with the others being supported in the classroom. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for one pupil, whose needs are supported within the classroom. The curriculum is modified for those pupils identified by the school as being the most able.

## 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 does not meet all of the required 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 should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.**

### 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 ensure good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, in respect of those relating to fire safety, and 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 Arrangements are not always made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The school does not always ensure that all staff engaged to carry out teaching work are checked against the list of those prohibited from teaching, or have suitable references, before they start work. Proprietors are not checked against those prohibited from management, as soon as practically possible after their appointment.
- 2.9 Health and safety requirements are not met as the school does not keep its asbestos management plan under regular review.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9–10, 12–16, 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, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding] and 11 [health and safety] are not met.**

### Action point 1

- **the school must have due regard to the guidance issued by The Secretary of State, when obtaining references, before a member of staff takes up their post [paragraph 7(a) and (b), EYFS 3.4, 3.7 and 3.9]**

**Action point 2**

- the school must check that proprietors are not prohibited from management, before or as soon as practically possible after appointment [paragraph 7(a) and (b), EYFS 3.4, 3.7. and 3.9]

**Action point 3**

- the school must ensure that the asbestos management plan is kept under regular review [paragraph 11; EYFS 3.54]

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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 The school does not always ensure that staff complete medical checks before they start work.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 19–21 are met but the standard in paragraph 18(3) is not met.**

**Action point 4**

- the school must ensure that medical checks are completed on all staff before they start work [paragraph 18(3); EYFS 3.9]

**PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

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

**PART 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.16 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 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, 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.
- 2.17 The school has not always made available to parents the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, or maintained on the school's internet website a copy of the report of inspection.
- 2.18 The standards relating to the provision of information in paragraph 32(2) and 32(4) and those in paragraph 32(3)(a-e) and 32(3)(g) are met but those in paragraph 32(1)(b), 32(1)(d) and 32(3)(f) are not met.**

### Action point 5

- the school must ensure that the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is made available to parents and that it maintains on the school's internet website a copy of the report of the previous inspection report [paragraph 32(1)(b), 32(1)(d) and 32(3)( f); EYFS 3.75]

### PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

### PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 The proprietor does not always ensure 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.
- 2.22 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 are not met.

### Action point 6

- the school must ensure that the leadership and management have good skills and knowledge in order to fulfil their responsibilities so that the independent school standards are met [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)]

### 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 good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; their appreciation of, and pride in, their school community shines through in everything they do and they want to do well.
  - Pupils have strong numerical skills.
  - Pupils have effective communication skills.
  - Pupils' independence in learning and resourcefulness in thinking are restricted by insufficient opportunities to develop and apply these attributes across all areas of learning.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils show high levels of self-confidence and self-discipline.
  - Pupils have a strong understanding of appropriate moral behaviour.
  - Pupils are socially adept and develop strong interpersonal relationships with their peers and across age groups.
  - Pupils show an excellent awareness of the importance of keeping safe, including online.

## Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:
- Enable pupils to develop and apply independence in learning and resourcefulness in thinking more effectively by increasing their opportunities to do so across all areas of learning.

## The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. All the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that teachers helped them to learn and make progress. Pupils work diligently at the tasks they are given and participate enthusiastically in class discussion, pair and group work. They make a strong connection between their own behaviour and their ability to learn, and show a highly developed sense of responsibility in this regard. When given the opportunity, pupils are keen to take the initiative and display independence, for example when sharing opinions during a debate. However, pupils' readiness to be independent in their learning is too often curtailed because they are not provided with enough openings to take ownership within tasks and activities.
- 3.6 Pupils develop a good range of study skills and are competent researchers. Older pupils skilfully used written information and thinking generated from class discussion to produce good quality work about Cuba. When given the opportunity, pupils analyse and synthesise information well. For example, older pupils employed higher order thinking skills accurately to reflect on observations of scientific investigations to draw conclusions and to analyse and compare biblical passages. However, the occasions when pupils can develop and apply such resourcefulness in their thinking across all areas of learning are too few.

- 3.7 Pupils make strong progress in developing their communication skills, especially at the top end of the school. They are eloquent speakers, confident readers and display competent writing skills. Pupils demonstrated excellent application of language when writing apology letters from Mr Wolf to the three little pigs and made excellent use of basic punctuation. Pupils confidently debate, persuade and write in different genres. Older pupils understand how to use a variety of techniques to start a story including description, intrigue, action or dialogue and independently select which to use for best effect. Pupils were observed in assemblies and group work listening attentively and responding empathetically to their teachers' questions and to their peers. Younger pupils talk confidently about the grammatical aspects of a story and delight in sharing their work with one another and the whole school. EYFS pupils talked with confidence about dinosaurs and where different animals might live in the world. Pupils' strong communication skills are seen when there is excellent teacher subject knowledge, high expectation of achievement, the opportunities for pupils to take ownership and be active learners, and when they are given space to put their skills into practice with well-chosen engaging tasks. Pupils read and speak with accuracy and expression. This is because of the focus placed on the importance of reading by the leadership, and because of effective interventions which are put into place for the less able to support their development, as a result of regular testing and teacher assessment.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages have excellent understanding of numbers and calculation. This is supported well by the focus on arithmetic skills at the beginning of lessons. Pupils develop a strong understanding of formal written methods at an early age. They use formal methods of computation above the expectations for their age. Children in the EYFS show confidence in manipulating numbers up to ten in nursery, and twenty in reception. Younger pupils confidently and accurately manipulate large numbers. The most able pupils use their understanding to solve multi-step mathematical word problems. Sometimes, the progress of the most able pupils is hindered by the pace of lessons and the lack of pupil response to marking comments. The less able students are able to keep pace in their progress with their more able peers because the slow pace of lessons, repetition and teacher modelling of examples effectively supports their needs. Pupils practise age-appropriate skills through a rigorously followed scheme of work. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and interventions are put in place to support those of lower ability. More able pupils make less progress in acquiring wider mathematical knowledge and higher skills because tasks are not always set which match their ability or provide sufficient challenge.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages and abilities make at least expected progress over time in relation to their above-average starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and English as an additional language (EAL), make good progress because of effective individual support and targeted teaching in lessons. Pupils gain places at their desired choice of local independent and state schools. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and the school's own assessment data, shows pupils' attainment overall to be above average when compared to those who take the same tests nationally.
- 3.10 Pupils develop a sound general knowledge, promoted by the science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) teaching initiative that has been initiated by the school's leadership. For instance, older pupils displayed a good understanding of scientific concepts such as evaporation and explained the potential effect of volcanoes on climate change. However, pupils' progress in developing their scientific skills, such as using graphs to display and interpret results, is hindered by marking that does not identify accurately enough when their work is incorrect or indicate sufficiently how to improve it. Pupils' artistic understanding and enthusiasm for creativity is supported by the linking of cross-curricula topics, but their knowledge of specific art techniques is underdeveloped because of the lack of focus on this. Pupils have good physical skills; they moved with confidence in dance, and showed strong hand-eye co-ordination in a ball skills session. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that teaching helped them learn and make progress.

- 3.11 Pupils have good information, communication and technology (ICT) skills that they enjoy using to enhance their learning. Younger pupils used these skills to enhance the production of their work and the enjoyment of the reader when publishing newspaper reports to relay information attractively to the class. They are introduced to programming and make rapid progress in acquiring associated skills and understanding. Pupils demonstrate competent technical skills, for example adding animation and sound to their presentation work, and in computer club using programming software to allow animations to speak. Pupils have many opportunities to apply these skills across other areas of learning, for example when using an animation programming tool to learn about Roman numerals, or effectively using data handling skills when creating bar graphs.
- 3.12 Pupils enjoy playing for their sports teams. There have been distinctive successes in a range of extra-curricular activities, for example in Irish dancing at national level and gymnastics for the county. Many pupils develop performance skills in local theatrical productions, including for a renowned inclusive drama company. Pupils achieve well in their music examinations. In the last academic year, pupils have achieved music and academic scholarships to local senior schools. Almost all parents felt the school provided a suitable range of extra-curricular activities.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and self-discipline. Older pupils confidently explained how teachers help them to make choices about their future schools. In discussion with their peers, pupils showed strong self-confidence in being willing to change their views after careful consideration of opposing ideas on climate change. Pupils persevere well with all tasks, and respond enthusiastically when stimulated by the challenge of enjoyable and relevant subject matter, and by the opportunity to be actively engaged in their own learning. This is supported by the school's aim to deliver a child-centred and coordinated approach to nurturing character for the future. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire felt the school helped children to be confident.
- 3.15 Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around school, respectful of one another when working in pairs sharing information to complete tasks, or when playing in mixed-age groups in clubs. Good behaviour is encouraged for the youngest children through their 'care, share and be fair' motto and the clear 'good to be green' behaviour code, and this moral grounding influences on-going respectful relationships throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate excellent understanding of right from wrong. They show a striking pride in their school and in each other's positive behaviour. All parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school promotes good behaviour.
- 3.16 Pupils have excellent social skills. They are very effective collaborators working as a team to collectively agree statements in a debate, or when sharing ideas with talk-partners, sometimes in multi-age groups. They have a strong appreciation of the school as a family. This is because of clear staff expectations, role modelling and emphasis on manners and behaviour. Pupils rise to the challenge of working in harmony across age groups because teachers give pupils ownership of social situations, which develop their collaborative skills. The oldest pupils demonstrate leadership skills developed through the leadership programme that has been initiated by the school management. The overwhelming majority of parents felt the school helped their children develop strong social skills.
- 3.17 Pupils have excellent and well-developed knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They are confident and knowledgeable about safety when on-line and also about road safety, and understand the importance of not giving out personal information. Pupils know they can talk to trusted adults in school if they have a concern. Teaching staff ensure that effective pastoral care and individualised attention for pupils is maintained at all times, including close liaison with parents.

- 3.18 Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of making decisions for themselves. They were keen to say that teachers encourage them to be their own best selves, not to worry about what others are doing, and that they have a right to have a say in issues. Pupils make incisive decisions within the school council, for instance when deciding on which charities to support and how to do so. They explained their positive choice of healthy fruit for snacks rather than sweet things.
- 3.19 Pupils value their immersion in the spiritual world and the role that prayer has in their everyday school experiences. Pupils have a strong appreciation of the non-material world because of the many opportunities they are given through school routines to experience prayer, or to be reflective. Reflection takes place in circle time, through being taught meditation techniques, and through yoga and Pilates clubs. Pupils learn about and compare different faiths in their religious studies lessons. The joy of the younger children was evident in their creation of pictures to celebrate the Hindu festival of Holi by mixing dry powder paints. Pupils understand the power of religion to aid the development of a strong moral stance. They are comfortable with, and talk with empathy about, the biblical passages that are on display around the school. Pupils explore and propose a variety of answers to philosophical questions, such as why Jesus was called the Lamb of God. This is when strong teacher subject knowledge and searching questioning elicits insightful answers from pupils and leads to their deeper understanding of concepts. Pupils recalled experiences on a residential trip, speaking about the beauty of the natural world, and that they were struck by the power of life 'being a blank page and full of possibility'.
- 3.20 Pupils are confident about respecting the diversity of faith. They express a natural acceptance of the good in all. Pupils and staff respect the importance of the unique individual. Pupils listened and talked with rapt attention to a story of different types of families; they state it is good to be different. During the inspection, all pupils were preparing to take part in an international evening celebrating society's diversity and this was well supported by the school caterers providing themed lunches.
- 3.21 Pupils make positive contributions to their own and the wider community. Pupils are keen to accept positions of responsibility within the classroom. In Year 6, responsibility extends as pupils take on roles as sports and house captains across the school. Younger pupils act out stories to support the youngest pupils in their learning, and older pupils enthusiastically engage in a shared reading activity with younger pupils. Older pupils look after and play well with the younger ones, acting as excellent role models and supporting them. Pupils are quick to spot if another pupil is alone, and, if so, ask them to join in their games. Pupils have confidence that their voice will be heard. They have suggested clubs and then organised them, such as library club and homework club, readily supported by the school. Year 6 pupils are keen to undertake their enterprise projects, stating they want to make things better for others, donating profits to charity. All pupils raise funds to support a range of local, national and international charities, for example at harvest time. Pupils sing in local homes for elderly residents and thereby further develop a clear sense of the positive contribution they can make to others' lives.

#### 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 governors, 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. 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

Mrs Vivien Sergeant	Reporting inspector
Mr Richard Raistrick	Compliance team inspector (Vice principal, IAPS school)
Mrs Clare Turnbull	Team inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)