

Inspection of Park Lane School

Park Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8JR

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

From the moment that pupils enter school at the start of each day, they feel happy, safe and have a strong sense of belonging. Children who join the school in the early years feel welcome from the outset. They swiftly engage in learning and join in activities with their peers with enthusiasm. They relish the wealth of opportunities that the school provides. Pupils in all age groups value their relationships with staff and with each other.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' personal development and of their behaviour. Across most of the school, these high expectations extend to pupils' achievement. Most pupils rise to the challenge of meeting these expectations and learn well. They show genuine interest in their learning and try hard during lessons.

Pupils are kind and enthusiastic. They are understanding of the needs of others. Pupils are proud to be given responsibilities, such as librarians and members of the pupil council.

Pupils increase their independence and develop their self-awareness during their time at school. They learn how to regulate their feelings and to use a range of systems to communicate their thoughts. Pupils enjoy many enrichment opportunities, such as film, choir and multi-sports clubs.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school has worked closely with the governing body to improve the quality of education that it provides. Governors have overseen the school's improvement capably. Staff feel motivated and inspired. They know that their work matters and that it can make a positive difference to pupils' lives. They feel well supported by the school to enable them to do their jobs well.

The school has established effective systems to identify any changes in pupils' needs. It ensures that parents' and carers' views are central to the review and planning of their child's provision. The school works purposefully with a range of specialists, such as occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. This helps to ensure that pupils' educational, health and care needs are met.

Communication is at the heart of the school's work. This work begins in the early years where staff use an impressive array of strategies to support children's communication, such as signs and symbols. As pupils move through the school, staff continue to use these strategies successfully to support pupils' learning and their wider development.

Staff are united in their belief that 'every pupil is a reader'. Staff have developed a range of research-informed pathways to support pupils in learning to read across the school. Some pupils develop a full knowledge of phonics and become accurate

readers. Others become more responsive to sounds, songs and stories. From their starting points, pupils typically learn well in reading and communication.

The school has thought carefully about what pupils should learn and the order in which this knowledge is taught. Staff help pupils to achieve their personal targets. They explain new content clearly. Staff bring learning to life. For example, where possible, they relate new learning to real-life scenarios, such as learning about money in a shopping context.

Staff use a range of appropriate assessment strategies to check how well pupils learn. They make sure that pupils are secure in their learning before moving on to new content. This helps pupils to build new knowledge and skills securely on what they already know and can do.

Most pupils study a curriculum that is ambitious and meets their learning needs. This ensures that most pupils achieve well. Despite this, some aspects of the key stage 4 and sixth-form curriculums are not as ambitious for a small number of pupils. These pupils are not challenged sufficiently by the scope of the curriculum. They are not entered for qualifications that reflect their knowledge and understanding in some areas.

Pupils are polite, respectful and considerate towards others. Their conduct is exemplary. Pupils follow the school's rules well, such as to have 'kind hands, feet and mouths'. Staff are attentive to pupils' individual needs. They spot signs that indicate when pupils may be anxious or distressed and intervene early. Staff use a range of strategies, such as sensory breaks, to help pupils to regulate their emotions so that they can refocus on their learning.

Most pupils' attendance is excellent. The school works successfully with a small number of pupils who struggle to be in school on time every day. This support for pupils and their families ensures that these pupils do not miss out on valuable learning.

Preparing pupils for adulthood is a golden thread that goes across the school. From the beginning of the early years, pupils embark on a personalised journey towards health, active citizenship and independent living. Many students in the sixth form benefit from work experience, which is well matched to their needs. However, pupils have limited opportunities to learn about different education and training providers. Furthermore, pupils have only recently benefited from effective careers advice. This means that some pupils are not fully prepared to make well-informed decisions about what they want to do when they leave the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects in key stage 4 and in the sixth form, the curriculum is not ambitious enough for some pupils. This limits how well these pupils learn and the qualifications that they attain. The school should ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious for all pupils.
- Until very recently, pupils have not received high-quality careers advice and guidance. Moreover, the school does not provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to meet with education and training providers. This limits their knowledge of the options that are available to them when they leave school. The school should ensure that pupils benefit from high-quality careers advice and guidance and have access to a range of education and training providers.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	111508
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10321328
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Tandy Palmes and Chris Milnes
Headteacher	Lorraine Warmer
Website	www.parklaneschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Park Lane School provides education for pupils, aged 2 to 19 years, with profound and multiple learning difficulties, complex medical needs and severe learning difficulties. There is an increasing number of pupils joining the school with autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Since the last inspection, the school has increased in size. A new building has been built to accommodate an additional 40 pupils.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no two- or three-year-old children on roll.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, communication, mathematics and physical education. This included meeting with subject leaders and staff, visiting lessons, talking with pupils and looking at their work and other evidence of their learning. Inspectors also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff, including leaders, to discuss different aspects of the school's work. An inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, the school's improvement partner and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with several parents. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff to consider.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection. They also met with members of the school council.

Inspection team

Will Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024