

Inspection of a good school: Parklands High School

Southport Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1LL

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

Parklands High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and cared for as part of this welcoming and friendly school. Pupils of different ages interact well in their mixed-age tutor groups. They said that this helps them to get to know many more pupils across the school. Overall, pupils enjoy attending Parklands High School. They are happy.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They work hard and they achieve highly.

Pupils know that leaders expect them to behave well. Pupils respond to leaders' high expectations by being polite and courteous. The atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful. Pupils spoke positively about how they learn to treat everyone equally and with respect. Any bullying is dealt with decisively by staff.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on leadership roles, for example as prefects or by joining the senior student leadership team. These groups provide regular feedback to staff about different aspects of the school. Pupils said that leaders listen to their views.

Pupils develop their talents through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as chess and musical theatre. They also enjoy rewilding clubs, which aim to restore our eco systems. Pupils relish these opportunities.

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

Leaders have prioritised the development of the curriculum with care and precision. They have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those pupils with SEND. Leaders have successfully taken steps to increase the number of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and the order in which they should learn new knowledge. Teachers successfully design learning activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers clearly explain the connection between what pupils have learned previously and any new content that they introduce. This helps pupils to understand how their learning links together.

Leaders have ensured that staff develop strong subject knowledge. Leaders have also successfully ensured that staff understand their assessment systems. Most teachers frequently and skilfully check that pupils know and remember the important information that they have learned. Where teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, they act promptly to address them.

Leaders swiftly identify pupils who have additional needs, for example those pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that staff receive detailed information about how to support these pupils. Many teachers are adept in adapting the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. However, a few other teachers are less secure in how best to support these pupils to learn aspects of the curriculum. This prevents a few pupils with SEND from achieving as highly as they could.

Leaders prioritise reading. For example, pupils in all year groups participate in daily reading sessions to improve their fluency and comprehension skills. This encourages a love of reading. Pupils said that they enjoy these sessions.

Leaders have recently strengthened their processes for identifying any pupils who are behind with their reading. Leaders have developed a well-thought-out programme to help these pupils to catch up. Staff are well trained to support pupils to learn to read, for example many have expertise in phonics. As a result, pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge catch up quickly.

Pastoral support is strong. For example, leaders ensure that there are dedicated staff who pupils can speak with if they are anxious or upset. Pupils manage their own behaviour well, both in lessons and during breaktimes. They are respectful of their teachers. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders have thought carefully about the wider knowledge and experiences that they want pupils to have. During 'Aspire, Secure and Respect' sessions, pupils learn a wealth of information to help prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Pupils experience a strong careers programme. Pupils in key stage 4 particularly value the opportunity to take part in work experience. Pupils receive the breadth of information that they need to inform their next steps in education or training.

Staff enjoy working at this school. Staff feel valued by leaders who are considerate of their workload and well-being. Trustees, governors and leaders know the school well. During this time of transition into a multi-academy trust, they have worked closely together to ensure that they can continue to provide a high-quality education for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a robust approach to safeguarding. Leaders provide staff with comprehensive training so that they know how to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders also check that staff know and remember this important training.

Leaders work with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the right support. They have strong links with the community. Leaders are aware of local issues and provide additional learning opportunities to pupils so that they understand any potential risks.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, for example when online. They learn about other issues, such as sexual harassment and why this is unacceptable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, a few teachers do not successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This hinders how well some of these pupils learn and achieve. Leaders should roll out their plans to ensure that all teachers are fully equipped to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138647
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10286275
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,106
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Keith Fielding
Headteacher	Steve Mitchell
Website	www.parklandsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2018

Information about this school

- The school became part of the Aspirational Futures Trust in February 2023. This school is the first school in the trust, which is in the process of expanding into a multi-academy trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of trust and the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority and a consultant working with leaders on school improvement.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents and records relating to pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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